Articles

By Śrīla Bhakti Ballabha Tīrtha Goswāmī Mahārāja

A Brief Biography of His Divine Grace Om Vishnupada Srimad Bhakti Dayita Madhava Goswami Maharaj

His Divine Grace Om Visnupad 108 Sri Srimad Bhakti Dayita Madhav Goswami Maharaj, one of the most favourate associate-disciples of His Divine Grace Om 108 Sri Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupad, is the tenth Acharya in the perceptional channel from Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and the Founder-Acharya of Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math. Registered Institution. His auspicious appearance occurred in the Village of Kanchanpara, Subdivision Madaripur, District Faridpur in East Bengal (now in Bangladesh) on Fraiday, November 18th--Utthan Ekadasi Tithi-- in the year of 1904 AD at 08.00 AM.

As the pastimes of awakening of All-Merciful, All-Good, All-Bliss Supreme Lord Sri Hari on Utthan Ekadasi Tithi (Utthan--awakening) is for the eternal good of all living beings of the world, the pastime of advant-awakening of His Personal Associate - His Absolute Counterpart Gurudev (Madhav Goswami Maharaj) on Utthan Ekadasi Tithi is also for the eternal benefit of all.

Param Pujyapad Most Revered Srimad Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami Maharaj used to comment, "It is profoundly significant that the Advent Day of Srimad Bhakti Dayita Madhav Goswami Maharaj falls on the disappearance day of Srimad Gaura Kishor Das Babaji Maharaj on Utthan Ekadasi Tithi and His Disappearance Day falls on the disappearance day of Vaishnava Sarvabhouma Srimad Jagannath Das Babaji Maharaj on Sukla Pratipad Tithi (the first lunar day of bright fortnight)."

The Holy Birth-place of Srimad Madhav Goswami Maharaj is situated at the bank of Padma River which is near to 'Premtoli' where Srila Narottama Thakur gor ecstatic feeling of Divine Love while bathing as per direction of Srimad Nityananda Prabhu in a dream. Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu kept Divine Love in

the custody of Padmavati Devi (presiding Deity of Padma River) to offer it to Narottama Thakur when he could come there to take bath.

Revered Bhakti Dayita Madhav Goswami Maharaj was of a high caste Brahman family, His Grant Father, Sri Chandi Prasad Deva Sarma Bandyopadhyaya, was a well-reputed prominent person of Vikramapur, Dacca (Bangladesh). His father's name was Sri Nishikanta Dewa Sarma Bandyopadhyaya. His Mather's name was Srimati Saibalini Dewi. His mather was of highly dignified, sober temperament - a wise woman endowed with many good qualities and as such an object of reverence to all His father passed away in His childhood. His parents named Him Sri Heramba Bandyopadhyaya, His petname was Ganesh.

Extraordinary saintly qualities were manifested in Him from boyhood. He was adored by all and was a universally accepted leader in every sphere. He strictly observed ethical rules and celibacy-Brahmacarya and taught other to observe celibacy and moral rules. The guardians and teachers were astonished to hear from the boy, profound words of wisdom. He got by heart, the complete Gita, at the age of eleven years merely by hearing Gita from his Mather. He practiced severe penance by taking only boiled food once in a day in his home at Calcutta. At that time while he was invoking Sri Krishna for His Grace and was weeping

severely in separation grief, He was blessed by seeing Sri Narad Goswami in dream and got mantra from Him. However, He could not remember the Mantra completely after waking from the dream. He becomes disappointed and, out of persistent solicitousness, left the house and went to the Himalayan mountains beyond Haridvar where He stayed at a stretch without food for three days continuously wailing and praying for the grace of Sri Krishna. At last, He heard the prophecy--a divine message directing Him - "Go back to your place, don't be disheartened, your Gurudev has appeared there, take absolute shelter to His Lotus Feet."

He then come down from the Himalayan mountains, remain for sometime at Haridwar and leter returned to Calcutta. He went to Sri Mayapur, the Holy Birth-place of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, with other friends and met His Gurudeva His Divine Grace Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Goswami

Prabhupad at Sri Chaitanya Math in the year 1925 AD. He was attracted by seeing His Divine Spiritual Personality. He took absolute shelter at His lotus feet and tool initiation from Him at Sri Gaudiya Math, at 1, Ultadanga Junction Road, Calcutta on 1st November in 1927 AD. He joined Sri Gaudiya Math Institution immediately after taking initiation and His devout vow of celibacy in young age. He was regarded as one of the most favorite entourage of Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Goswami Prabhupad within a very short time by His devout devotion to Guru. His competence in rendering all kind of service, untiring enthusiasm and diligence to serve Vishnu and Vaishnavas. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Goswami Prabhupad seeing His undaunted spirit to contribute to the objective of the Institution by way of practicing and propagating the Gospel of Divine Love of LordChaitanya Mahaprabu, used to commend Him saying--"His energy is volcanic energy." Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Goswami Prabhupad never hesitated do sent Him to perform any important task or to send as advance party as He was confident and sure that the task at hand would be successfully completed in due course. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Goswami Prabhupad had so much confidence in Srimad Hayagriva Das Brahmacary (Madhav Goswami Maharaj) that He first selected Him to be sent to foregn countries for preaching and for which Passport and everything were ready. But Rajarshi Sri Sarandindu Narayan Ray, one important household devotee objected to this proposal saying that Sri Hayagriva Das Brahmacary was young and very beautiful. "There may be difficulty in sending such a beautiful young Brahmacary to foregn cointries, instead an old sanniyasi should be sent there." At this suggestion Param Pujyapad Srimad Bhakti Pradeep Tirtha Maharaj was sent. Srimad Hayagriva Das Brahmacary was resembling in appearance with His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Goswami Prabhupad so much so that many outside people wrongly thought Him to be the son of Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Goswami.

Srimad Madhav Maharaj took Tridandi Sannyasi at the age of forty (40) from His God- brother His Divine Grace Srimad Bhakti Gourav Vaikhanas Maharaj (a sannyasi disciple of Srila Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta) at Sri Tota-Gopinath Temple, Purusottam Dham on Gaura purnima in the year 1944 and He become renowned in Gaudiya Math as His Divine Grace Parivrajaka Acharya Tridandi Swami Srimad Bhakri Dayita Madhav Maharaj. As per direct direction of His Divine Grace Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Goswami Prabhupad, His Divine Grace Madhav Goswami Maharaj started His preaching in Assam and

established three Maths at: (1) Tezpur. (2) Guwahati and (3) Goalpara. He was also managing the seva-puja of Sorbhog Sri Gaudiya Math (in Assam) founded by Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Goswami Thakur.

He founded Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math Institution in the year 1953 and established many big preaching centers in various parts of India.

A Message Of True Catholicism

BY GOKUL

ENGLAND, Jun 29 (VNN) — An intimate meeting with HDG Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaj

On the morning of Friday 24 May 2002, Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaj, accompanied by Srila Bhakti Vicar Vishnu Maharaj, Sriman Ananta Ram das Brahmacari, Sriman Srikant das Brahmacari and Sriman Sudarshan das Adhikari, alighted at London Heathrow Airport, commencing the 2002 preaching tour of the UK and European countries. Devotees from the US, Holland and other parts of the UK came to join the entourage, as they toured England through 2 June. After that, Maharaj and the other devotees continued the European tour in France, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Austria and Slovenia, which is still underway as of this writing.

This year, the UK itinerary was diverse, including public programs at the Seekers' Trust in Kent, The London Theosophical Society, The De Nobili Interfaith Centre, Borders Books and Music in Central London and Gaur Govinda Gaudiya Math in Birmingham. There were also many wonderful home programs held in all four directions in Bromley, Slough, Brighton and Leicester. The devotees were blessed to have Maharaj's divine association during many auspicious days, including Nrsimha caturdasi on 25 May, where Srila Tirtha Maharaj led a hair-raising Nrsimha kirtan, culminating in the enthusiatic chanting of "Jaya Dao! Jaya Dao!"

While every program was certainly memorable, there was one particular event that deserves special mention. On the morning of Monday 26 June, Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaj had a meeting with Father Alfred Agius, a Jesuit priest, who serves as head of the Westminster Interfaith group, throughout the Catholic diocese of Westminster (greater London). Father Agius, an amicable person of genteel character, had been a missionary in India for many years and can speak fluent Hindi and Bengali. He is also familiar with Vedic literature and has a great

respect for Indian theological schools of thought. This meeting, held in the Westminster Interfaith Office, located in a tidy and tastefully landscaped complex in Central London, was intimate, with only Maharaj, Father Agius and a few other devotees present.

After exchanging introductions, Father Agius showed the devotees a number of nice publications he had assembled for the Westminster Interfaith, demonstrating his sincere dedication to presenting religious perspectives from various faiths. Maharaj perused these materials for some time while the other devotees engaged in conversation with Father Agius.

After a few minutes, Maharaj suddenly began to speak. He seemed nearly trancelike, focusing his eyes straight ahead of him. Everyone else in the room, including Father Agius, immediately became silent and listened with rapt attention. First, Maharaj addressed the "Interfaith" theme of the day by defining the word "Hinduism".

"If you look up the word 'Hinduism' in the Oxford dictionary," he said, "you will find this definition: 'religious system practiced by a Hindu'."

Everyone laughed at this.

"So," he continued, "if you look up the word 'Hindu', the Oxford Dictionary says, 'One who practices a system of faith involving the worship of many gods and goddesses and belief in the caste system."

Maharaj went on to explain the vital difference between the idea of modern 'caste system', which is based upon birth, and the varnasrama system, which is based upon the character of a person. He showed how the varnasrama system is a natural thing. He said, "If someone has the tendency to worship and study scripture, he is a brahmana; if he has the tendency to rule, then he is a ksatriya. It does not matter if you use a different word, in your own language. The word is not important, but the concept is universal." Father Agius agreed whole-heartedly with this explanation.

Maharaj then went on to explain the misconception that Hinduism involves the worship of many gods and goddesses. He explained how the Vedas are designed

to appeal to every type of human being, all of whom are influenced by the various modes of material nature. There has to be some system by which even those who are in ignorance may make advancement. Thusly, those who are addicted to eating flesh and consuming intoxicants can be gradually elevated to a higher level by worshipping the goddess, Durga, who is the embodiment of the illusory energy of the Supreme Lord. By this gradual process, even the lowest of human beings can come to the higher platform, to rajo-guna, then to sattva-guna and eventually to nirguna, or transcendence. Maharaj clearly explained how this method was in no way 'polytheistic', as the ultimate goal was always devotion to the One Supreme Lord.

Father Agius and the other devotees listened most attentively as Maharaj went on to describe the nature of the soul, atma, and how it differed from the body. Next, he described dharma and was particularly emphatic as he differentiated it from the word "religion". In great detail, he described the ten Vedic dharmas, explaining how they "hold society together". One by one, Maharaj explained the efficacy of these dharmas, including celibacy, truthfulness, charitableness and non-violence.

When Maharaj came to describing non-violence, he gave a clear explanation of how violence always comes back to the person who projects it. He slapped the tabletop with his hand. He said, "If I hit this table, what happens? The result is that I hurt my own hand. Similarly, if we perform any act of violence, it will immediately come back to us. This shows us, logically, that violence cannot sustain society; only the practice of non-violence can." Maharaj went on to describe sanatana-dharma, and Mahaprabhu's formula for World Peace, in which God must be at the center of all thought and action. He used the analogy of many circles with differing centers. "At some point, their circumferences will cross, indicating conflict," he said. "Only when their centers are focused on the same point will the circumferences stop crossing each other. Some may be larger, some smaller, some will perform a little service, while others will perform a lot; but all will fall around the same central point." This, he said, was the only actual formula for World Peace.

Then Maharaj went on to describe how the teachings of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu contained the tools to activate that formula. He beautifully began to describe the lovely kirtan of Sri Krishnachaitanya, especially in His pastimes

during His pada-yatra through the jungles of India. "When Mahaprabhu chanted to the animals, the tiger and the deer were kissing! How is such a thing possible? Because the Holy Name awakened their true nature." Maharaj described how they are not tigers and deer; they are not enemies; they are not hunter and hunted. These are all illusory attributes-they are actually part and parcel of the Supreme Lord. The Holy Name has the power to awaken the true self in all living beings. In a trancelike state, Maharaj chanted, "Hari o' rama rama, hari o' rama rama!" (Caitanya Bhagavata, Madhya-lila, 23.92).

Everyone was quiet for a few moments as Maharaj continued to gaze straight ahead, as if he were looking at his beloved Gurudeva. After this silence, Father Agius finally said, "Well, I have to thank you so much for that beautiful explanation of...of...well-reality!" He then humbly submitted to Maharaj that there were some branches of Catholicism, the Eastern Orthodox Church in particular, who share the view of the potency of chanting the Holy Name. He recited a prayer that he called the "Jesus Prayer", which, he said, is recited repeatedly by adherents to the Eastern Orthodox Church. Repetition of the Name of Jesus was its focus. Maharaj then mentioned to Father Agius that he had been to the Vatican on a previous European preaching tour. He described how he found it odd that the devotees there did not take off their shoes before they entered sacred places. "Perhaps it is because it is a cold climate?" Maharaj offered. "Then perhaps, when it is warm weather, they might be encouraged to take off their shoes?" Father Agius smiled at this, understanding the point.

Maharaj then went on to describe his impressions when he had viewed the "Pieta" of Michelangelo. The "Pieta" is a marble sculpture of the body of Jesus lying in the arms of his mother Mary, after His crucifixion.

Maharaj said, with extreme emphasis, "When I saw this statue, frankly I was shocked!"

"Shocked?" we asked.

"Yes! I was so shocked to see how Jesus died! And for the sake of the living beings!" Maharaj's face showed genuine compassion when he spoke about this. Father Agius seemed clearly touched by the experience of that meeting with Srila Tirtha Maharaj.

As we got up to go, Father Agius offered the devotees a little cultural exchange, and he began to sing a Bengali song by Rabindranath Tagore, much to the amusement of Sriman Ananta Ram das. It was a sweet and light-hearted end to an inspirational morning.

To conclude in a manner in keeping with Maharaj's teachings, we note that the English dictionary defines the word "Catholic" as "wide-ranging", "broad" and "all-embracing". Our sampradaya, descending form Sriman Mahaprabhu is often also referring to the "all-embracing doctrine of Divine Love". This memorable meeting between His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaj and His Grace Father Alfred Agius elucidated the true meaning of the word "Catholic", of "Interfaith" and of "Divine Love" for all sentient beings and their Ultimate Source, the Supreme Lord, Sri Krishna.

A *Sadhu* Does Not Retaliate Against the Oppression of Others

Narada Gosvami gave advice to Dhruva. Dhruva's mother, Suniti, also advised him thusly. "If you have any kind of hostile mentality against your stepmother, then you will not succeed in your worship of the Lord. You will not receive His grace. Your stepmother is not the cause of your miseries--you are the cause. You have brought this upon yourself through some behavior in a previous birth. You are now reaping the fruits of that behavior:

mamangalam tata paresu
mamstha bhunkte jano yat
para-duhkhadas tat (Srimad
Bhagavatam, 4.8.17)

"Do not blame others for your afflictions. You do not realize that you are receiving the same afflictions that you once inflicted upon others. God is omniscient. There cannot be any mistake in His judgment. You should tolerate this." Sadhus think like this. A *sadhu* does not retaliate against the oppression of others. Goodness always emanates from the sadhu. He cannot give any injury to any living being of this world. The tendency toward harm is completely absent from his character, so how can he do harm? He always does good toward others. In the holy biography of Prahlada Maharaja, you will find that he tolerated the oppression of Hiranyakasipu. Haridasa Thakura, during the life of Caitanya Mahaprabhu, also tolerated great oppression--titiksavah.

If sugarcane is cut to pieces, will it say, "Oh! You have given me affliction! I shall give up my sweet nature! I shall become bitter or sour!"? Even if you cut sugarcane to pieces, it will not give up its nature. It will always give a sweet taste. Its nature is to give sweetness. No other tendency is there. If you heat gold, that gold will not give up its radiant glow. "Oh! I have been burnt by fire! I shall give up my beautiful radiance and become black!" No, as much as you heat the gold, by that much, its glow will increase. Like this, if you oppress the sadhu, his glory will be manifested ever more and more. He is incapable of doing any harm to any living being of the world. By such behavior, you are to understand such a person to be a sadhu.

A Sincere Soul Will Never Be Deceived

Supreme Lord Sree Krishna says in the Gita, 6.40 - 'na hi kalyana-krt kascid durgatim tata gacchati'. A sincere soul will never be deceived. A shuddha bhakta - pure devotee can never have the aptitude to enjoy or renounce. Supreme Lord Sree Krishna is the only Enjoyer and Master of all sacrifices. He is the only 'Purusha' (Supreme Person). As we are not masters and enjoyers, we cannot enjoy or renounce. We are the parts of the potency of Supreme Lord Sree Krishna, so naturally we are to be dominated by Supreme

Lord Sree Krishna.
Finite atomic animated beings of the world (jivas), by the misuse of their relative independence, when become averse to Sree Krishna, are enveloped by the illusory energy of Supreme Lord consisting of three primal qualities- Sattva, Rajah and Tamah- and are hurled down in this world. As they misconceive themselves as enjoyers of this world, they pass through cycles of births and deaths and suffer severe threefold afflictions. An actual master can enjoy or give up. As jivas are not masters, they cannot enjoy or give up. The spirit of enjoying and the spirit of giving up are unnatural. They are eternal servants - their only duty is to serve. As example may be given here of Indian family-life. In India, when a chaste woman is married to a chaste man, that chaste woman, according to Indian social custom, belongs to that chaste man and even changes her family-descent from parents to husband.
That husband is the owner of house, property as well as his wife. If that wife prepares many good dishes for her husband from the articles belonging to the husband and after preparing good palatable dishes, says to the husband, "I am contributing these to you". This sort of ego of contribution is wrong and will be ridiculous. Our gross body and subtle body being the outcome of material potency (Apara Potency) of Supreme Lord Sree Krishna and our real self, being the outcome of the spiritual energy (Para Potency) of Supreme Lord Sree Krishna, both belong to Sree Krishna. As my potency works for me, Supreme Lord's potency will also work for Him. By serving Krishna with all His articles in proper way, we can get the highest objective - Love for Sree Krishna. So service of Krishna is natural and all else are unnatural.

A Vaishnava's body is never material

It should be remembered that a Vaishnava's body is never material. It is transcendental and completely pure. Mahaprabhu's affection for His devotees was displayed to Hari Das Thakur, which has been described in the Chaitanya Charitamrita as follows:

Hari Das said, "You are the merciful Supreme Lord; no one can understand the depths of Your heart. Vasudeva had such terrible leprosy that his gaping wounds were full of maggots, You are so merciful that You embraced him in spite of it. Your embrace turned him into a young man as beautiful as Cupid. No one can understand the waves of Your mercy."

Prabhu kahe vaishnava deha prakrita kabhu naya
aprakrita deha bhaktera cid-ananda-maya

The Lord answered, "A devotees' body is never material. The devotee's transcendental body is made of divine and ecstatic spiritual substance." (Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.4.191)

A person who is without introspection or awareness of Krishna sees a Vaishnava's body only externally and thus is deprived of the vision of his spiritual form. On 27 Jan 08.

Accept the Superior Knowledge of Ishvara

The Bhagavad Gita says: “Bhagavan uvaca” - “the Supreme Lord said...,’’ indicating that it is the Supreme Lord Himself who is speaking.

Krishna is referred to as Bhagavan in the Gita. Bhaga means opulence, and van means one who possesses. God or Bhagavan is des-cribed as one who possesses all opulence, knowledge, wealth, power, beauty, fame and renunciation. There are many rich, wise, famous, beautiful or powerful men, but no one man can claim to possess all of these opulences. Only Krishna claims to possess them in totality.

Bhaga also signifies shakti or potency. So Bhagavan is Sarvashaktiman, one who possesses infinite opulence. Ishwar or God means One who has power

and wealth. To disbelievers I'd like to ask that when in every worldly sphere of activity we are willing to submit to and get enriched by experts in their respective fields, why not accept and submit to the all- encompassing wisdom of the Almighty?

By our refusal to accept the Almighty, He will lose nothing, says the Ishopanishad. That is, if you subtract Purna from Purna (the whole from the whole) the remainder will be Purna, it will not be zero. Infinite minus Infinite is also Infinite.

I once invited the Nobel prize-winning scientist C V Raman to preside over a function on the occasion of Sri Krishna Janmashtami at Sri Gaudiya Math, Bagh Bazar, Calcutta . The scientist declined the invitation on the ground that Krishna was fictitious and he had got no intention of wasting valuable time on such functions.

Dr Raman said that if I could reveal Krishna to him, he would go to attend the function, as he did not believe in something that could not be comprehended by observation and experiment. Behind the northern portion of his laboratory was North Calcutta . I asked him: "I am unable to see anything beyond this wall. If I say there is nothing outside this wall, will it be correct?" Dr Raman said, "I can see through my instruments."

When I pointed out that there is a limit to the power of instruments for you can see only as far as your instruments allow you to see, Dr Raman said: "I will not give my attention to anything that is not within my sense-experience. Can you show me your God?" I said: "If your students say to you, they will study your scientific findings only if you make them realised first, then what would you say?" Dr Raman said, "No, they are to take my process through which I have rea-lised the truth." I said, "If this is true for you and your scientific knowledge, can the seers of ancient India not say exactly the same thing? Why not follow their process and see whether you experience God's existence or not."

The Supreme Lord is Asamor-dha - there is no equal to Him and no more than Him. Nothing, not even a dust particle can be outside the Infinite and Absolute. As there is no equal to Him and no more than Him, without His will nobody can realise Him. He is One, so realisation of Him is also one -

to submit to His will. Service means to act according to the will of the served. This is Bhakti or devotion.

Bhakti is the best way to attain God. While the Karmis want non-eternal benefits in this world and in the higher worlds, Jnanis want emancipation, merging into Formless Imperso- nal Brahma. The ultimate goal of Yogis is to attain 18 kinds of Yogasiddhis or Kai-valya (merging into Paramatma). Shuddha Bhakta or Krishna Bhakti is scarce.

(The writer is President Acharya of Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math and President, World Vaishnav Association)

All Arrangements In This World Are Momentary

Our Most Revered Gurudeva used to advice not to takeany decision by own initiative, as mind and intellect of a finite being is always incomplete and defective. Any decision taken by finite mind and finite intellect will increase more problems. The correct way is totake absolute shelter to the Lotus Feet of Supreme Lord and His Absolute Counterpart - Gurudeva or Shuddha Bhakta, who are omniscient and All-Merciful. Alight of Transcendental Divine Knowledge will enter into the heart of the surrendered soul and remove all doubts. All problems will be solved by it immediatelyand effectively. I mean to say in short, we should not be carried by our finite, mental and intellectual feeling. One should be guided by the realised souls.Finite individual souls of the world, by their finiteintellect can never solve their own problems and alsoproblems of other finite living- beings, as they are enveloped by illusory energy. They have got misconception of self and wrong knowledge of theiractual requirements, but the difficulty is this,association of a bonafide Shuddha Bhakta or Sadguru isvery scarce. Our only hope is this, Supreme

Lord SreeKrishna has said in the Gita - 'If anybody is sincere,he will never be deceived'. God exists in the heart ofevery soul and knows everything. Nobody can do good orbad acts without His knowledge and Supreme Lord iscontrolling the fruits of the actions of all. We cando actions, but can have no hold over the fruits ofactions.

'Those who always worship Sree Krishna with sincerity of heart, Supreme Lord bestows them wisdom to understand the way to attain Him' - Gita 10.10

Narada Goswami's instruction to Dhruva - '(If conditioned soul wants to attain God) One should never blame others for his own troubles and worries. The conditioned souls reap the fruits of their own actions' - Srimad Bhagvat, 4th Canto.

Last message of His Divine Grace Most Revered Paramgurudeva Srimad Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur to His disciples before His disappearance:- 'Don't be disheartened seeing that majority of the people of the world are not accepting service of Sree Krishna (Devotion to Sree Krishna) without deceitfulness. Don't give up your worship and your only spiritual wealth of hearing and chanting Krishna-Katha. Always do Hari- Kirtan being humbler than a blade of grass and more tolerant than tree.

All arrangements in this world are momentary'.

An Excerpt from "Suddha Bhakti"

"Suddha Bhakti, the path of pure devotion" is presently available through GOKUL and other devotional outlets. This book is a discourse on the topics of Sambandha-tattva (the principle of relationships), Abhideya (the methodology used to attain the ultimate goal) and Prayojana (the ultimate goal of existence). Below is a brief excerpt taken from the final section, "Prayojana."

In Krishna lila we find that, one day, there were no servants in Nanda Maharaja's house. So mother Yasoda went herself to churn butter from the

milk. While she was churning the milk, the young child Krishna came to her. At this time Krishna had just learned how to walk and was playing the pastime of being hungry. He said, "O mother, stop churning, I am hungry. Give me milk!" To this Yasoda replied, "There are no servants here, so I am busy. Don't disturb me."

After hearing this, Krishna, with His beautiful small hand, grabbed hold of the churning stick. Yasoda was charmed and put the child on her lap to breastfeed Him, but at that very instant, the milk on the stove started to boil over. So, Yasoda said to Gopala, "Get down, the milk is boiling." But Krishna's appetite had not been appeased and He did not want to get down. He said, "Give me more milk." Yasoda thrust Krishna down and ran to the stove. Krishna became very angry because of this and wanted to break the pot containing the yogurt, but He was at the same time afraid of His mother. So, with a small stone, He silently struck the pot until the pot broke and all the curd spilled onto the floor. Then, seeing other pots hanging from the ceiling, He climbed onto the mortar and broke all the pots.

Sometimes the other gopis complained to Yasoda and Nanda Maharaja. They complained that Krishna was very naughty, and would come to their houses at night. They said, "We light lamps to keep the thieves away, but your boy blows them out. Then He steals our butter." Then Nanda would ask Krishna, "Kanhaiya, did you do this?" "No father. I did not. They are telling lies." Krishna would put on a very innocent face, like a sadhu or a saint. When His parents saw this innocent expression, they thought it impossible that Krishna could have done such a thing. Nanda Maharaja would answer the gopis' charges, "I have thousands of cows. I am the king of Vraja. Why should my son go to another house to steal butter?" The reason was that sometimes Krishna wants to go to other people's houses to give them a chance to serve Him. Normally His parents would not allow Him to go anywhere else to eat. They love Krishna too much themselves. That is why He sometimes acts like a thief, to give all His devotees a chance to serve Him, to fulfill their desires. So, outwardly, it seems as though Krishna was destroying everything and spoiling the yogurt by eating it and feeding it to the monkeys. But the fact is that the yogurt was prepared from the milk of cows who desired that their milk be used in Krishna's service. So actually Krishna was giving all a chance to serve Him in this way.

When Yasoda returned from the stove she saw what mischief Krishna had wrought. He had destroyed all the pots and was feeding the monkeys. As a result, she wanted to punish Him. She thought, "If I do not correct Him, His

character will be spoiled." So, Yasoda decided to cane the Supreme Lord Bhagavan to correct His character. She approached Krishna silently, hoping to catch Him by surprise. But just when she was about to catch Him, Krishna jumped up and ran away. Soon Yasoda was chasing Krishna all over the courtyard, but she quickly became tired and started to move more slowly. Although nobody is able to catch Krishna, He Himself slowed down and allowed her to catch Him because of her pure affection for Him.

Yasoda said, "What have you done? I shall cane you!" Krishna was afraid of the cane in His

mother's hand and started to cry. Even the god of death fears Krishna, the Supreme Lord, but Krishna is afraid when He sees a cane in the hand of His mother. How is this possible? This is Vraja prema. The Vrajavasis do not see Krishna as God. They only love Him from their hearts.

Then, Yasoda felt pity for Krishna and decided instead to fasten Him with some rope, so He could do no more mischief. She tried to tie the rope around His belly, but the rope was short by two fingers. Again and again she brought more rope, but it was always two fingers short. So, although we see, on the one hand, that Krishna was limited like a small boy, in fact He is unlimited even in His apparent limitation.

Why was the rope always two fingers short? What is the significance of this? One finger represents the grace of Krishna, the other, the sincere service with which we can attract His grace. Yasoda never stops in her service of Krishna, and that is why in the end Krishna allowed her to bind Him with the ropes of her love. We must also make the same kind of sincere effort to serve Guru and Vaisnava; then we will be able to attract their grace.

Srila Rupa Gosvami has written this song:

bandhu sange jadi taba ranga pariahs
thake abhilas tabe mor katha rakha jeyo
naka jeyo naka vrndavane kesitirtha ghater
sakas
nayane bankina-drsti mukhe manda-has

"If you still desire to amuse yourself with your friends, you should not go to Vrndavana. And if you go to Vrndavana, you should especially not go to Kesi Ghat. There is a danger lurking there. What is that danger? It is Sri Hari, Krishna Himself, who has taken the form of Govinda, Govinda vigraha dhari. The danger is that if you go there and see Him, if you have a vision of Govinda, you will not be able to return to the customary amusements of your ordinary household life.

The look of His eyes, His crooked glance, is very dangerous-- nayane bankima-drsti mukhe manda-has. He is not standing straight, but tri-bhanga, with three curves. If this Krishna enters you, He will not come out. If Narayana enters, He may come out. Narayana is straight. But Krishna is curved like a hook and that is dangerous.

His color is like the color of a rain cloud-- varna samujjvala syama. You will find that in the springtime the leaves of the trees are so fresh. Similarly, Krishna is not old, but rather, a young adolescent. The lips of His mouth are very dangerous and if you see the peacock feather on His head, you will not be able to come back to your household life. So, if you want to have fun with your friends, you should not go to Vrndavana, and should not see Krishna.

Unfortunately, we go to Vrndavana and still come back. We do not have such devotion. If anybody truly had the greed for Govinda, he could not return to his mundane life. His worldly relations would be destroyed. Greed for devotion is developed by associating with the pure devotees of the Lord. By their grace it becomes possible for us to attain Krishna prema, divine love for God, the ultimate goal of life.

Appearance of Srimati Radhika

In Bhakti Ratnakar it is mentioned that the place of appearance of Srimati

Radharani is Sri Raval dham.

anayaradhito nunam bhagavan haririswarah
yanno vihaya govindah prito yamanayadrahah (SB 10.30.28)

Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur’s translation: O gopi, certainly She, for Whom Sri Krishna had left all of us and took Her alone to a secluded place, is a better servitor of Supreme Lord Sri Hari. The inherent purport is that since She is the crest jewel among the other female consorts of Sri Krishna, Her name is Sri Radhika.

In the Brihad-Gautamiya-Tantra the name of Sri Radharani is vividly explained –

devi krishnamayi prokta radhika paradevata
sarva-lakshmimayi sarva-kanti sammohini parah

Apart from these, the actual identity and glories of Sri Radhika are narrated in great detail in Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita by Srila Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami, in Govinda-lilamrita and scriptures compiled by the Goswamis.

A brief description about Sri Radharani from Sri Brahmavaivarta Purana is as under:
In the arena of highest divine mellow in the abode of Goloka She, who appeared from the left hand side of Sri Krishna and got attracted and ran towards Him, is known as ‘Radha’. Radha appeared from Sri Krishna and is His non-different manifestation. Hence She is dear-most to Sri Krishna. From the sweat pores of Sri Radharani million crores of cowherd girls and from the sweat pores of Sri Krishna, million crores of cowherd boys and cows appeared.

One time when Sri Krishna was engaged in pastimes with Sri Viraja, the messengers of Srimati Radharani went to Her and complained Her about this. Sri Radhika in an angry mood rushed towards Sri Krishna. Seeing this, Sudama, the associate of Sri Krishna, informed Him about the arrival of Srimati Radhika. Thinking that Radharani’s arrival at that place would turn the situation troublesome, Sri Krishna along with Sudama and other friends ran away from there. Viraja gave up her body and became a river. After reaching the place Radharani could not find anyone. Later when Sri Krishna met the eight principle gopis and Radharani, She chastised Him severely. When Sudama could not tolerate this and objected Her, She cursed him that he would take birth as a

demon. Sudama also cursed Her in return, “ You will take birth in earthly planet falling from Goloka having to tolerate the intolerable separation from Sri Krishna.” Sudama became Shankacuda demon being cursed by Radharani.

The essence of the narration about the appearance of Sri Radharani as explained in Sri Radha Tantra is the following:
Lord Vasudeva once worshipped Yogamaya for a long duration when Yogamaya appeared and said, “ You cannot attain perfection by performing the penance alone without being accompanied by Lakshmidevi. The four garlands around my neck – Hastini, Padmini, Citrini and Gandhini are my messengers. The Padmini garland will be known as Radha in the abode of Vraja. Go to Vraja and meet Padmini. By this your penances will be successful.” After listening to the words of Yogamaya, Lord Vasudeva desired to see the form of Padmini. Immediately goddess Padmini appeared in front of Lord Vasudeva in an effulgent and reddish thousand petal lotus flower. Lord Vasudeva was surprised by beholding the form of Padmini. She (Padmini) only performed the pastime of appearing in the form of an egg in a Lotus flower in the river Kalindi.

King Vrishabhanu was engaged in the worship of Yogamaya on the banks of river Kalindi in order to get a beautiful baby. Yogamaya Katyayini, being satisfied by his worship, gave the aforementioned effulgent egg to king Vrishabhanu and said, “I am subdued by your wife’s devotion; give this egg to her. You will be blessed with a beautiful baby girl. As soon as Vrishabhanu placed the egg in front of his wife Kirtida, the egg broke and Sri Radharani appeared.

Regarding the appearance of Sri Radharani it is also said – by the fruit of the penances of king Vrishabhanu on the banks of river Yamuna, Radharani self-manifested on an unprecedented hundred petal lotus flower in Yamuna. Vrishbhanu was extremely pleased being blessed with a wonderful and most beautiful baby girl but saw that the eyes of the baby were closed. He was all the while unhappy internally for the baby being sightless. One day his friend king Nanda along with his wife Yasodadevi and the child Gopal came to his place. While Vrishabhanu was narrating his sorrow to king Nanda one surprising incident took place. Small Gopal crawled towards Radharani and touched Her. She immediately opened Her eyes. Radharani had taken a vow that she would see Krishna only when She opens Her eyes for the first time. Hence as soon as Krishna came She opened Her eyes.

--- Excerpt from the lecture given by Srila Gurudev on September 05, 2011 on the day of Radhastami. (Translation by Prahlad Das)

Are we performing bhakti by engaging physical body or sense organs?

We have to remove all kinds of false ego completely. Should there be any false ego, karma will predominate, not bhakti. If we do anything by means of our false ego, vanity, we will get only temporary, mundane benefits. We will become more attached to this world. This world is made of matter. Consequently, our minds will become inert like matter. Our minds will have no connection with the spiritual realm. After performing such activities, we will find ourselves in the same position as we were when we first started. We cannot get bhakti by only moving from place to place and going through motions. This is not bhakti. This is karma.

There are sense organs and objects of the sense organs. Without them, we cannot move. But, simply engaging the sense organs and the objects of sense organs is not bhakti if the ego is not correct. By performing devotional practices while deluded by egoistic misconceptions, we will achieve only material benefit. If we think "I am of Krishna! I am of the vaishnavas! I am of the guru!" while engaging the sense organs and the objects of the sense organs, we will actually be practising the devotional forms.

By the fruit we can understand whether or not we have come in contact with Krishna. When you perform any kind of bhajana, if it comes from the core of the heart, you will never be able to give up that worship of your most beloved. When you get a spontaneous glimpse of contact with Krishna, you will experience a thrilling sensation of ecstasy. How could you give that up? You will not wish to give up any form of devotion. When there is the thought in your mind to give up worship, then it means that you have not come in contact with Bhagavan and His transcendental qualities.

Attaining the Infinite With the Spoken Word

We learn with the help of four methods, says the Srimad Bhagavatam: through experience, deduction, studying history and oral traditions.

What we learn with the aid of our physical organs — seeing and hearing with our eyes and ears for instance — fall under the category of experience. The second method of learning is deduction.

When we observe an event that's happening, we spontaneously try to deduce the reason behind it. For instance, when we see smoke, we presume it is due to a fire at that place as we know already that there can be no smoke without fire.

The third mode of learning is by studying history. By acquainting ourselves with history we learn of the happenings during past times as history can inform us about the past. Fourth, through oral tradition we learn of places we've never visited from a person who has or who has learned of it from someone else who has. This is the power of the spoken word. Among teachers, this is the preferred mode of dispensing knowledge.

As one cannot guess or deduce without experiencing or watching a happening, learning by guessing or deduction could be categorised under experiencing. On the other hand learning from history could be included in learning through words as history is narrated or written in words and that comes from sound or spoken words. Finally, then, we are left with two modes of learning: Self-experience and spoken words.

Learning by self-experience is not absolute for there is no guarantee that what you are learning is 100 per cent true. This mode of learning has four defects;

Incorrect observation (as in the case of a mirage), the inability to learn 100 per cent, uncertainty about facts, and our limited ability to experience (constrained by the sensory limits).

Hence learning by experience is not an absolute mode of learning. So, in order to learn about an absolute Godhead, we need to access a mode of learning that is also absolute. Then, we are left with only one mode of learning that is absolute — the spoken word.

The next question is, what kind of spoken word is required to learn about the absolute Godhead? Krishna's devotees are free of the four defects mentioned earlier. Their devotion to the Lord is so pure that the words they utter reveal to us the actual truth about Krishna and His transcendental abode. The knowledge given by these devotees to us is the purest knowledge. Or we can refer to the words spoken by Krishna himself, through the lineage of pure devotees who speak on behalf of Krishna.

To learn about Krishna, the seeker has to first pray for his mercy. Some ask, if the Lord is infinite, and we cannot know Him completely, why bother at all? Why should seekers renounce the world in search of an unachievable objective?

Indeed, Krishna is limitless (infinite), complete and omnipotent and it is impossible for anybody to learn about an infinite, omnipotent Krishna, with one's existing capabilities and penance. But if one is able to do so then Krishna will become within limits (finite). Secondly, Krishna has the capability to learn about himself. So, one can learn about Krishna only when one is blessed with the Lord's grace.

The Bhagavad Gita is the Song of God, the words having been uttered by Krishna himself. The Srimad Bhagavatam is about Krishna. By studying the sacred words of these two works, it is possible to experience at least a part of the infinite. To experience the Absolute should be our goal.

(The author is president, World Vaishnav Association, All India Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Math and founder, Global Organisation of Krishnachaitanya's Universal Love, GOKUL)

Begin Bhajan immediately

The Puranas narrate the episode of a great war between the devas (demigods) and the asuras. In this war Maharaj Khatvanga formed an alliance with the devas and defeated the demons. The demigods were very pleased with him and wanted to offer him a boon, so king Khatvanga prayed for deliverance from death. The devas told him that no one can give protection from death, except for the Supreme Lord, Vishnu. Immediately, the king left the company of the demigods and fully surrendered to Sri Vishnu.

tato yateta kushalah
kshemaya bhavam ashritah
shariram paurusham yavan
na vipadyeta pushkalam
(Sreemad Bhagwatam, 7.6.5)

''For this reason, one who is intelligent will fear the sufferings of material existence, and understand that without devotional service to the Lord one will fall from his position (na bhajanti avajananti sthanad bhrastah padanti adah). In other words, without serving the Lord there can be no relief from misery. Having properly understood this point, one should sincerely pursue the real benefit of human life by engaging in devotional service to the Lord in early childhood, before being attacked by disease and old age'.

When old age makes one an invalid, it becomes very difficult in devotional service because of physical weakness and attachment to material senses and mind. Therefore, one who is intelligent, with a vision of the future, will think ahead, realizing what results the future may bring. Such a person will be very careful about his spiritual life even from childhood. On 11 Feb 08.

Benefit of Serving sadhus

Why do sadhus (pure devotees) display bodily discomfort? Just to give us an opportunity to serve. This is the only way we can get deliverance. They give us a golden opportunity to get this deliverance by serving them. This is our seva-suyog, a golden opportunity to serve sadhus. It will cleanse the dust on our heart.
In Chaitanya Bhagavata, 9.240, it is written that whatever privations are seen in the behaviour of vaishnavas, know for certain that they are expressions of their esoteric internal supreme bliss.
It appears that pure devotees are receiving various tribulations, but actually they do not feel them, as their minds are fully engrossed in Me (Srimad Bhagavatam, 3.25.23). We can only pray for their mercy to get an opportunity to serve them.
This material world is full of problems. Nobody on earth can avoid it. There are always ups and downs in this world. The Supreme Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has said "This world is a forest fire and chanting the Holy Name “Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare // Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare”, the Mahamantra, will extinguish the forest fire."
The difference between a realised soul and a conditioned soul in this world is that the realised soul, by the grace of the Supreme Lord, has got the capacity to tolerate all afflictions and tribulations, but a conditioned soul cannot. A conditioned soul remaining in darkness cannot solve any problem. When light comes, problems created by darkness are automatically removed.
Parampujyapad Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj, quoting Bhagavad Gita in one of his sermons said "When one is enlightened by knowledge by which ignorance is destroyed, then his knowledge reveals everything as the sun lights up everything at daytime." The Supreme Lord, who is All-Bliss is self-effulgent. He descends to a completely surrendered soul.
As for instance, Prahlad Maharaj, who was apparently in the grief of extreme torture by his own father and was surrounded by hostile demons, was always in peace because of his total submission to Supreme Lord Sree Krishna, and he never became unbalanced.
Our Most Revered Gurudeva used to advise us "Finite human beings, taking any

decision by their finite intellect and wisdom for their own benefit, commit mistakes and the result is reverse. If we take absolute shelter to the Lotus Feet of Guru-Vaishnava-Bhagavan, by Their grace, the light of transcendental knowledge will descend to our heart and solve all problems." In my life I have practical experience of it.

Chaturmasya Vrata (From the letters of Srila Gurudeva)

Chaturmasya Vrata is observed by all – Karmis, Jnanis, Yogins and Bhaktas – for the attainment of their respective ends. It is a kind of penance. But there is difference in the mode of sadhan, as the ends of Karmis, Jnanis, Yogins and Bhaktas are different. The ultimate goal of Bhaktas is to get love for Sri Krishna (Krishna – Prema).

Supreme Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, our Most Revered Param Gurudeva and our Most Revered Gurudeva, observed Chaturmasya Vrata only to teach us that we should also observe this Vrata.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu observed Chaturmasya Vrata at Purushotham Dham and at the house of Sri Venkat Bhata in Ranganath Dham by spending the whole time in Krishna-Katha.

Listening and chanting of the Holy Name, Form, Attribute and Pastimes of Sri Krishna should be mainly performed. Along with this we should also observe exoteric rules as enjoined in the scriptures as far as practicable.

Gourd (Louki), Bean (Kidney bean, along-size bean), Brinjal, Patal (a kind of vegetable), ‘Kalmishak’ and ‘Purnishak’, two kinds of herbs (Leaves of plants) are prohibited in the four months of Chaturmasya. ‘Kalmishak’ and ‘Purnishak’ are not available in your side, so you are not to bother about this. All leaves of plants are prohibited in the month of ‘Sravan’, curd is prohibited in the month of

‘Bhadra’ and milk in the month of ‘Ashwin’ and all kinds of tasteful food prohibited in the month of ‘kartik’. There are other rules also. You are to know these by personal contact.

Affectionately yours,
Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

Other detailed Rules for Chaturmasya Vrata:
Please refrain from taking the following during all four months of Chaturmasya: Semphali, Barbati, Parval, Baingan, Nagar-Motha, Mushrooms, Radish, Honey, Lauki, Urad, Rajma, Beans, Lobhia, and Oil of Soyabeans.
Apart from above please refrain from consuming the following in respective months:
a) All types of Saag (including Pui Saag) - during 1st month 3July - 2August, 2009
b) Curd (Dahi) - during 2nd month 2August - 31August, 2009
c) Milk - during 3rd month 31August - 30September, 2009.
d) Mustard Oil and Rai - during 4th month 30September - 29October, 2009.

One must refrain from cutting nails and hairs during all four months. In nut shell, one must abandon all sense pleasures and devote maximum towards the chanting of Hare Krishna Mahamantra, listening to Harikatha from Vaishnavas, serving Sree Vigraha and Sri Tulasi, thereby devoting majority of time in devotional practices (bhajan).

However during these four months, we can cut our nails and hairs on the day of Sri Vishvarupa Mahotsav in respect towards Sri Vishvarupa, an incarnation of Lord Balrama. Sri Vishvarupa accepted Sannyas vow on this day. The date is 4th September, 2009.

Clear Your Heart For God To Appear

BY GOKUL

INDIA, Jul 16 (VNN) — PURI RATH-YATRA, 2002

In Kathopnishad, it is written that this body is the Chariot. A suitable boat to cross the ocean of births and deaths. The mind is the reign or bridle to control the horses, the senses. The intellect (wisdom) is the charioteer. Atma (the soul) is the owner of the chariot.In Gita Lord Sri Krishna says, To those who are constantly devoted and worship Me with love, I give understandingby which tnhey can come to Me.

In the run-up to Rath yatra, a procession was taken out by the devotees from the birth-site of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur Prabhupad. On way to Gundicha Mandir, dancing and chanting along with devotees, His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj, WHO WAS LEADING THE Sankirtan-procession, stopped for offering obeisance at Sri Jagannath Vallabh Vatika, where he elaborated on Rathyatra, as given above.

Then at Gundicha, all were thrilled with the loud chants of Hare Krishna! It was like power cleansing of the mind.

Explaing the significance, Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj said that one who is blessed by Lord Jagannath, can come to participate here. Supreme Lord has got affection for all. His affection for us equals billions of parents! Whosoever sees Jagannathdeva in the chariot, is rescued from this cycle of births and deaths.

When we do not want His grace, we say, He is not kind to me. We blame others, thinking ourselves to be alright.

Those who have eagerness to serve, get His support. When we want His service, He supports. But we do not want His service, we want to enjoy! Look into your heart, whether you want His service or...

Even the trees engaged for the making of the Ratha, are rescued by the Lord.

Being immobile living beings, trees are unable to render a direct service. If they are put in service, their life is successful. Everything is from Jagannathdeva, in Him and it should remain for Him. A Service cannot go futile.

Lord Jagannath is appearing eternally in the hearts of the pure devotees. I have appeared, extending His both hands to embrace all, but His darshan is possible only with the eyes of love.

There is no place for Laxmi Devi in Gundicha Mandir, where Lord will stay.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu took all devotees to cleanse the Gundicha, a day before the Rath yatra. This is to clear your heart for God to appear. If our desires are removed, then the heart becomes sanctified. In a sanctified heart, Lord of the Universe Sri Jagannath appears!

Rathyatra signifies the desire of the Gopis to take Sri Krishna from Kurukshetra to Vrindavana. Original Rath Yatra was started by Indradyumna Mahara in Satya-Yuga. There is an evidence in the scriptures that Prahlad Maharaj had drawn the Ratha.

In Puri there are 62 festivals throughout the year. Rath Yatra is most attractive. It begins with the Chandan Yatra on Akshaya-Trtiya, then Snan-Yatra then Gundicha Marjan and culminates in Rath-Yatra.

Submitted by Rasaviharidas, Secretary,

Controlling our minds

There is one illustration in Srimad Bhagvat that Sree Jajati Maharaj could not satisfy his sexual lust even by prolonging his youth by getting the young age from his youngest son Puru for one thousand years. He came to sense after one thousand years that he took a wrong procedure and ultimately gave up

completely, appetite for sexual pleasure. He declared *"na jatu kamah kamanamupobhogena shamyati habisakrisnavartmoiva bhuya evabhih vardhte"*. If anybody goes on pouring ghee (clarified butter) to the fire, that fire will go on increasing, in the like manner, if we go on giving impetus to sexual pleasure, it will go on increasing and we will not be delivered from this evil propensity.

Our Most Revered Gurudeva used to advise us by giving the example, if a huge amount of ghee, say 1000 kg of ghee is poured on the fire, the fire will be extinguished. The only way of extinguishing the desire of sexual pleasure and other desires is to have extreme longing of getting Supreme Lord who is Absolute and Complete Reality, but to get this extreme desire for realization of God-relation, association with bonafide devotee Sadhu is absolutely necessary. In case of not getting the association of bonafide Sadhus physically the only other way is to go on praying the grace of realized souls like our Most Revered Gurudeva, Most Revered Paramgurudeva, other Guru-Vargas, Six Goswamis and such established realized souls. The Personal Associates of Supreme Lord may appear anytime anywhere to rescue the fallen souls if it is sincerely prayed for.

(Further I think you are repeating four Narasimha Mantras at least each mantra four times and after that Pancha-tattva and Mahamantra four times, while going to bed in the night and rising up in the morning. You will get immediate effect if you utter those mantras loudly (Not doing silently, mentally). If loud utterance is not possible at least you should utter those mantras with less sound. The Transcendental sound of utterance of Holy Names can remove pollution of material sounds.)

We should always remember about the highest ideal of devotion of Ambarish Maharaj narrated in Srimad Bhagavatam, 9th Canto. He engaged all his sense-organs, his mind and objects of sense-organs for the service of Sree Krishna continuously without any interruption and by that he was able to conquer all kinds of worldly desires completely. As Ambarish Maharaj engaged all sense-organs and mainly the master of sense organs - mind towards thinking about the service of Lord, he had no scope of imbibing material desires into his heart. Positive devotional spiritual practice is more effective than negative way of practice - practicing detachment from evil desires. If we do not do positive devotional practice, how can we remove evil desires from the mind. Parikshit Maharaj by hearing sincerely and most attentively with concentration Transcendental Hari-Katha from Shukdeva Goswami continuously for one week could get the ultimate objective. Shukdeva Goswami imparted the Holy Ideas.

The Holy Divine Ideas entering into the heart removed all non-eternal evil ideas. Non-eternal evil ideas are light and Transcendental Divine ideas are heavy, as for example if heavy things are dropped into a tank of water, water-light thing will be purged out completely, but in this procedure also, speaker of Hari-Katha should be a realized soul like Shukdev. When darkness of ignorance envelopes the whole world, no enslaved jivas of this world can rescue us other than appearance of Supreme Lord or his Personal associates. For this reason, God Himself sometimes appears in the world or as per His direction, His Personal Associates appear to rescue the fallen souls. When we do not get contact of personal associates of Supreme Lord, we have got no other way except going through their precepts, i.e., their own writings. Therefore occasionally I remember the precepts of our Most Revered Gurudeva. Recently I read and discussed His own writin g "Amar Bhajan-My Worship" at Chandigarh, which can rectify us and actually those words had a great impact on the minds of the listeners. I have the desire to translate those most impressive teachings of Srila Gurudeva into English but as ill luck would have it, I have got no spareable time and no competency to do this. I may translate but I fear my translation will not be as effective as words of Gurudeva will be.

Lastly, as without taking medicine nobody can be cured, without doing positively anything, we cannot get effective result. Inspite of our evil desires imbibed in the mind through cycles of births and deaths, we should not stop our bhajan.

Countering the cruelty and violence in the world

According to Lord Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Transcendental Divine Love is the strongest spiritual force on earth, which can establish close relation of love and unity of hearts amongst all human beings and thereby establish real peace in the world. There is an outbreak of conflagration of group clashes throughout the world. Nowhere you will find peace. I am worried to read in newspapers the news of bomb explosions and disturbances. A section of people have become so violent and barbarous that they do not hesitate in committing heinous crimes in

assassinating innocent persons to fulfill their political ends. All humanitarian considerations have been relinquished. They are now seeking justifications in committing such great sins. When there are different centers of interests, nobody can avoid clashing of individuals, groups, nations etc. As for example, if circles are drawn with different centers, circumferences will cross, but if there is one center of interest there may be smaller or bigger circles but there will be no crossing. According to Lord Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu there should be knowledge of the real self, real interest and one center of interest.

Supreme Lord Sree Krishna who is 'Achyuta' can only be the common center of interest from whom all the spirit souls have emanated. If we pour water at the root of the tree, whole tree is nourished with all its parts, in like manner, by serving Krishna we serve all. Non-Violence is to refrain from doing injury to others - it is negative, but love is to do positive good to others. If anybody has got pure love to any person, he cannot have the impetus to inflict injuries to any part of the object of his love. If we get love for Krishna, we cannot have the impetus to inflict injuries to any of His parts emanating from His marginal potency. All Jivas are interrelated through their relation to Sree Krishna. Lord Krishna has said in the Bhagavat Gita (18.62) "O Scion of Bharata, Surrender unto Him utterly. By His Grace you will attain Transcendental peace and Supreme and eternal abode."

Complete unconditional surrender to the Lotus Feet of Supreme Lord Sree Krishna can only bestow on us eternal peace. The moment we shall submit to Sree Krishna unconditionally, our all ills and sufferings will go. 'Sharanagati ' is the best medicine for cure of all afflictions and the solution of all problems. False egos create false interests and by that clashing of interests we see the forest fire in this world. Supreme Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has said, if individual spirit souls can have the knowledge that they are interrelated with love relation, this forest fire of clashing of interests will stop. So Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has said, Divine Love is the best and only solution of the disturbed situation of the world. That Divine Love (Prema-Bhakti) for the Supreme Lord can be cultivated by 'Nama-Sankirtan' -chanting of the Holy Name of Supreme Lord, viz. Krishna, Rama, Govinda, Madhava, etc. In the present age, 'Nama-Sankirtan' is the best medicine and effective way to achieve the summum bonum of human life as it can be performed under any sort of circumstances. Nama-Sankirtan is a universal religion under whose banner people of all sects and rank can unite. Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Math institution is engaged in the propagation of the all-embracing doctrine of Transcendental Divine Love of

Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to counter the present trend of violence and cruelty and to bring unity of hearts amongst all irrespective of caste, creed and religion.

Dear Gurudev, How can we be rescued from endless anarthas, desires for money, material sense-gratifications and name and fame?

My dear Sree *** Das,
Received your affectionate letter dated 5th January, 2001 through e-mail and noted the contents. There is one illustration in Srimad Bhagvat that Sree Jajati Maharaj could not satisfy his sexual lust even by prolonging his youth by getting the young age from his youngest son Puru for one thousand years. He came to sense after one thousand years that he took a wrong procedure and ultimately gave up completely appetite for sexual pleasure. He declared “na jatu kamah kamanamupobhogena shamyati habisakrisnavartmoiva bhuya evabhih vardhte”. If anybody goes on pouring ghee (clarified butter) to the fire, that fire will go on increasing, in the like manner, if we go on giving impetus to sexual pleasure, it will go on increasing and we will not be delivered from this evil propensity. Our Most Revered Gurudeva used to advise us by giving the example, if a huge amount of ghee, say 1000 kg of ghee is poured on the fire, the fire will be extinguished. The only way of extinguishing the desire of sexual pleasure and other desires is to have extreme longing of getting Supreme Lord who is Absolute and Complete Reality, but to get this extreme desire for realisation of God-relation, association with bonafide devotee Sadhu is absolutely necessary. In case of not getting the association of bonafide Sadhus physically the only other way is to go on praying the grace of realised souls like our Most Revered Gurudeva, Most Revered Paramgurudeva, other Guru-Vargas, Six Goswamis and such established realised souls. The Personal Associates of Supreme Lord may appear anytime anywhere to rescue the fallen souls if it is sincerely prayed for. Further I think you are repeating four Narasimha Mantras atleast each mantra four times and after that Panchtatva and Mahamantra four times, while going to

bed in the night and rising up in the morning. You will get immediate effect if you utter those mantras without doing silently or mentally. If loud utterance is not possible atleast you should utter those mantras by uttering with less sound. The Transcendental sound of utterance of Holy Names can remove pollution of material sounds. We should always remember about the highest ideal of devotion of Ambarish Maharaj narrated in Srimad Bhagvatam, 9th Canto. He engaged all his sense-organs, his mind and objects of sense-organs for the service of Sree Krishna continuously without any interruption and by that he was able to conquer all kinds of worldly desires completely. As Ambarish Maharaj engaged all sense-organs and mainly the master of sense organs — mind towards thinking about the service of Lord, he had no scope of imbibing material desires into his heart. Positive devotional spiritual practice is more effective than negative way of practice – practicing detachment of evil desires. If we do not do positive devotional practice, how can we remove evil desires from the mind. Parikshit Maharaj by hearing sincerely and most attentively with concentration, the Transcendental Hari-Katha from Shukdeva Goswami, continuously for one week could get the ultimate objective. Shukdeva Goswami imparted the Holy Ideas. The Holy Divine Ideas entering into the heart removed all non-eternal evil ideas. Non-eternal evil ideas are light and Transcendental Divine ideas are heavy, as for example if heavy things are dropped into a tank of water, water—light thing will be purged out completely, but in this procedure also, speaker of Hari-Katha should be a realised soul like Shukdev. When darkness of ignorance envelopes the whole world, no enslaved jivas of this world can rescue us other than appearance of Supreme Lord or his Personal Associates. For this reason, God Himself sometimes appears in the world or as per His direction, His Personal Associates appear to rescue the fallen souls. When we do not get contact of personal associates of Supreme Lord, we have got no other way except going through their precepts, i.e., their own writings. Therefore, occasionally I remember the precepts of our Most Revered Gurudeva. Recently I read and discussed His own writing “Amar Bhajan—My Worship” at Chandigarh, which can rectify us and actually those words had a great impact on the minds of the listeners- votaries- sincere seekers of Truth. I have the desire to translate those most impressive teachings of Srila Gurudeva into English but as ill luck would have it, I have got no separable time and no competency to do this. I may translate but I fear my translation will not be so effective as words of Gurudeva will be.

Lastly, as without taking medicine nobody can be cured, without doing positively anything, we cannot get effective result. Inspite of our evil desires imbibed in the mind through cycles of births and deaths, we should not stop our

bhajan.
May All-Merciful Sree Guru-Gauranga Radha-Krishna bless you. My love to you all.
Affectionately yours,
Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

Dear Gurudev, I have got lust, envy and anger as well as don't have interest in Harinam. Please save me.

My dear Sree *** Das,
Received your e-mail dated 19th May, 2001 and noted the contents.
I reached here with the party, about 20 heads, yesterday to participate in the annual function of Puri Math on the occasion of Sree Jagannath Deva's Car Festival. I am awfully busy here in some urgent works of our institution. I shall return to Calcutta on 24th instant and from there I shall go to Agartala to attend the annual function of Agartala Math and return on 3rd July. I have the programme to leave Calcutta on 9th July for Chandigarh, via New Delhi.
You should understand the difference of this material world and the Transcendental Spiritual Realm. Sree Krishna is the only Master and Enjoyer in the Transcendental Spiritual Realm – Vrindavana Dham and there, all others are His servitors in different love-relations. The target of the servitors there is only for the satisfaction of Sree Krishna and for nothing else. Whereas in this world, the conditioned souls, all think themselves as masters and enjoyers and they want to enjoy and lord it over others. This whole material world is the place of forest fire, where all are egocentric and they are fighting with each other for material interests. When centers of interests will be many, clashing is inevitable. We remain in this world with misconception of self and for the fulfilment of material non-eternal desires. With this thinking we can be happy – it can never be possible.
You have already heard several times from Vaishnavas that the real self of the Jiva is the eternal servant of Supreme Lord Sree Krishna and when he forgets his

relation with Sree Krishna and is enveloped by the illusory energy, he is hurled down in this material world to get the punishment for his aversion to Sree Krishna— for his reluctance to serve Krishna. The conditioned souls, due to forgetfulness of their relation to Sree Krishna, are passing through cycles of births and deaths from time immemorial. It is not so easy for them to change their propensity to enjoy this world. Even a person who starts drinking wine and becomes habituated to it, cannot give up his bad habit all of a sudden, even while understanding fully well that intoxication is bad for his eternal welfare. In the like manner, we have imbibed through cycles of births and deaths, so many various propensities in this world. It will take time to change our habits. For that if we loose patience, we cannot get the objective.

"Sadhan bina sadhya vastu keho nahi paye"

Nobody can get his objective without performing penance for it. A neophyte to devotional practice may be restless at any moment, if he does not get actual association of bonafide shuddha bhakta. It is not so easy to get such association in this material world, atleast in western countries where they are more inclined for material enjoyments.

We should not be disappointed for this. If we are sincere, we will never be deceived and Krishna will protect us. God is All-Merciful and His personal associates are also All-Merciful.

You should remember four Narasimha Mantras, each four times, as well as Panchtattva and Mahamantra, each four times before going to bed and after rising up from bed. Narasimha Bhagavan can remove all ulterior desires and bestow pure devotion to Him.

Supreme Lord willing, we may go to ***, leaving New Delhi airport on the ***.

My love to you all. May All-Merciful Sree Guru Gauranga Radha-Krishna bless you.

Affectionately yours,

B. B. Tirtha

Dear Gurudeva, how to cross over the ocean of birth, death and threefold afflictions?

Dear***

I received your undated letter by e-mail through *** Das upon my return to India from the Russian tour.

Our previous guru, Srila Saccidananda Bhaktivinode Thakur, has described a picture of the prison house where the conditioned souls of the world who are averse to the Supreme Lord are hurled down as prisoners. Prisoners cannot expect to find actual abiding peace in this world-prison house. To think so called worldly sensuous enjoyments as good is the symptom of the severity of the disease. Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur has stated in his hymn:

“I do not like this world, which is replete with birth, death and infirmity. Wealth, the non-eternal relationships of wife, children and so on, actually do not belong to anybody. At times we seem to engage in a relationship with parents, a wife, children, brothers, sisters and others, but after death these relationships will completely vanish. After passing through 8,000,000 species, we have attained the precious human birth— the competent boat to crossover the ocean of births and deaths and threefold afflictions. God has granted the power of discrimination to the human being to distinguish between good and bad and eternal and non-eternal. The conditioned soul, who after receiving this precious human birth, spoils his valuable time for eating, sleeping, defending and mating like the birds and beasts, without worshipping the Supreme Lord Who is All-Existence, All-Knowledge and All-Bliss, is most unfortunate.”

In the same way that, in this world, we go to a doctor for the treatment of various diseases, a fortunate human being will approach a spiritual doctor— a bona-fide guru for the amelioration of the tremendous suffering of the disease of repeated births and deaths. Our Most Revered Gurudeva, before His disappearance, advised His disciples that the desires of wealth, sex-enjoyment and name and fame, are the greatest obstacles of worship of the Supreme Lord. Votaries should give up all anti-devotional desires. Of course, it is very difficult for a neophyte-aspirant to give up these unholy desires. The conditioned souls are attracted by such things. These desires remain in the neophyte-aspirants but those who seek their eternal welfare should not give indulgence to these desires.

There are two paths—the path of sensuous enjoyment and the path of eternal welfare. 999 people out of 1000 or more are running after sensuous enjoyments. At the time of enjoyment, the path of sensuous enjoyment seems to be like nectar, but the consequence is poison. The threat of various diseases must also be seriously considered. If unfortunate persons are inclined to enjoy without restriction, then, nowadays, such ignorant persons take the risk of becoming

infected by diseases such as AIDS and so on. The path of eternal welfare, where the aspirant restricts the passions and enjoyments of the senses, seems at the beginning to be like poison, but the consequence is nectar. Actually, only those who have taken to this path of eternal welfare are eligible for the worship of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. We should not indulge in anti-devotional activities. We should completely abandon and never adore these propensities. A sincere aspirant should never emulate unfortunate, evil-minded people otherwise what will determine the difference between a votary and an ordinary enslaved jiva?

"na jatu kamah kamanamupabhogena shamyati habisakrisnavartmoiva bhuya evabhir vardhate"

If we pour "ghee" (purified butter) into a fire, the flames will increase. In like manner, if we fulfill the desire of lust, the lust-fire will also increase. It will not be extinguished. Therefore, this is not the procedure for obtaining deliverance from our propensity to fulfill lusty desires. If, however, we pour a huge quantity of ghee at one time onto the fire, then the fire will be extinguished. Analogously, if we have a craving for the Absolute-Whole, Sri Krishna, then this craving will extinguish the fire of worldly or sense-gratifying desires.
The association of bona-fide sadhus is essential for neophytes for their devotional and spiritual progress. In the case of want of bona-fide devotees, they should take the help of the powerful spiritual sayings of saints by going through the devotional scriptures. One should also worship Tulasi with great devotion and pray for Her grace. The positive performance of the devotional methods with devoutness is more effective than the negative endeavor to restrict anti-devotional aptitudes.
May All-Merciful Sri Guru and Gauranga bless you all. My love to you.
Affectionately yours,
Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

Disappearance Anniversary of Shrila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Maharaj

The Disappearance Anniversary of Most Revered Siksha Guru Param Pujyapad Sreemat Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Maharaj will be especially celebrated this year at Sree Gopinath Gaudiya Math, Ishodyan, Sree Mayapur, Nadia, West Bengal on Thursday, 29th November, 2001. On my return to India from preaching-tour in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, London and Holland, my well-wisher friend devotees have been continuously requesting me to send some writing, praying the blessings of Sreemat Puri Goswami Maharaj, to be printed in the special issue of 'Bhagavat Dharma'. The pressure of repeated requests to write on Most Revered Puri Goswami Maharaj has an impact on my mind that most probably my Most Revered Siksha Guru, in view of His anxiety for my eternal welfare, is ordering me to pray for His grace, through his own persons. There is no doubt Param Pujyapad Puri Goswami Maharaj had some exceptional affection for me, for which I am not worthy to get. In fact, when Puri Goswami Maharaj was living, I cannot remember whether I did any service to Him. This is the best instance of realising that suddha bhakta's grace is always causeless. Although now we have got no direct contact with Him but indirectly He is doing everything. I have got no capacity to pay back my debt to Him, as I am incompetent in every aspect. I have got no realisation of His ontological aspect, but morphologically what I had seen, He was always performing all devotional functions sincerely and wholeheartedly and it was His desire that others should also be sincere in their worship of Sree Krishna. I accept submissively with reverence, His advice to me in His affectionate letter dated 9/6/1995 — "There is no doubt Srila Gurudeva is always protecting you everywhere and will protect you in future. Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur and Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu expressed Their desire that Their message of Transcendental Divine Love should be propagated in all quarters of the globe. It is my belief, They will surely protect you. Gurudeva, inspite of His disappearance is always regulating everything [His pastimes of appearance and disappearance are eternal]. You yourself said you had personal experience of it. Therefore, if you serve Them, taking shelter at Their Lotus Feet, there cannot be any impediment to your getting the objective.

I pay my innumerable prostrated obeisances to the Lotus Feet of Most Revered Siksha Guru Sreemat Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Maharaj to forgive me for my offences which I might have committed knowingly or unknowingly and always to shower His causeless mercy unto me so that I am capable of fulfilling the desire of Sree Guru and Gauranga.

Discussion with Chief Minister of Assam

Before returning to Calcutta, Srila Gurudeva spent a few days in the Assamese capital, Guwahati. Through the efforts of Krishna Keshava Brahmachari and Chinta Haran Patgiri, he had the opportunity to meet many of Assam's leading citizens and preach to them. Amongst these people were Assam's chief minister, Gopinath Bardalai, Durgeshwar Sharma, Kumudeshwar Goswami, Bhuvana Goswami, Kanakeshwar Goswami, Rohini Chaudhari, Navin Bardalai, Girija Das, Dhiren Deb, Charitra Babu, Narendra Babu and others.

Arrangements were made for Srila Gurudeva to speak on the Bhagavat at the Chief Minister's house. The people who came there to hear him speak the pure doctrines of the Bhagavat were enchanted. One day after Gurudeva's lecture, Gopinath Bardalai came to him with great enthusiasm and praised his explanation of siddhanta. He said, "Upon hearing your *Bhagavat-patha*, I am convinced that your objectives and those of Mahatma Gandhi are the same. You give so many examples from scriptures and explain everything logically, and then you tell people to chant the names of Krishna. Gandhiji also ends his speeches, in which he talks about so many different things, by engaging everyone in '*Ram-dhun*.' So both of you have the same goal-to make people chant the names of God. I don't see any difference between your messages. What do you think of this opinion?"

Srila Gurudeva recognized that Gopinath Bardalai had great faith and affection for him. He did not wish to disturb his mind by saying something that would hurt him, so he decided to instruct him according to his level of understanding. He said, "If you don't mind, then I will tell you what I think."

The Chief Minister said, "I have been illuminated by all your valuable instructions. I have never heard such a learned discourse on the Bhagavat from anyone else before. How could I mind if you say anything at all for my benefit. Speak freely and say whatever you wish to say."

Guru Maharaj then said, "Before I entered the math, I used to take part in the Independence movement. From Sabarmati, Congress used to publish an English magazine called *Young India*, which I often read. I read in one of the articles, that Gandhiji told his audience in a speech that he was ready to abandon even the chanting of the Holy Name for the sake of his country. As far as I can remember, his exact words were, 'I can even sacrifice *Ram-dhun* for my country.'

"We, on the other hand, say exactly the opposite: 'We can sacrifice our country for *Ram-dhun*.' Our worshipable Lord Rama is not there for anyone. He is for Himself and everything exists for him. Western philosophers have defined the Absolute by saying, 'The Absolute is for itself and by itself.' We do not have refer 'It-God'. Our Lord is the Supreme Person, the 'He-God.' So we prefer to say, The Absolute is for Himself and by Himself.' The unlimited universes come out of Him, they exist within Him and he maintains them. So their existence is uniquely to fulfill His ends. If anyone wishes to worship the Lord, he must have a proper theological understanding."

Gopinath Bardalai was so influenced by Srila Gurudeva's powerful personality that he told him he wanted to abandon householder life and live in the math, dedicating his entire life to the service of the Lord. Unfortunately, his associates would not let him leave politics. Not long afterward he died and so was never able to do as he had wished. Politics are so entangling that once one has gotten involved in them, it is very difficult to extricate oneself.

As a result of the influence Srila Gurudeva had on all these important people in Guwahati, he became well known both in the city and outside it. After completing his preaching activities there, he returned to Calcutta.
Posted on 26 Feb 08.

Divine Words

Everybody has different natures in this world. Inspite of being disciples of the same Guru, all do not have the same qualities. But we should adjust to the envoirnment around us. The father of Prahlad was not devotee and his son Virochan was also not devotee but Prahlad, spending his life in one-pointed devotion, did brilliant adjustment with both. He never dishonoured his father Hiranyakshipu and neither expressed anger to his son Virochan. If we see maladjustment, we shall be disturbed and we cannot concentrate on the object of worship and we forget everything, what for we have got this human birth. We are to adjust ourselves with the environment, we can never make the environment adjusted to us.

In your country there is not much family life as is here in India. So wherever you remain, you should continue to lead a devotional life.

* * *

Supreme Lord Sri Krishna has said in the Gita (7.7)- 'Mattah parataram nanyat kincid asti dhananjaya, mayi sarvam idam protam sutre mani-gana iva'. "There is nothing superior to Me. Everything is everlinked with Me as pearls are connected by thread." This realization of connection with all living beings in relation to Supreme Lord, will solve all problems caused by maladjustments. In this connection we should deeply think what Prahlada Maharaja spoke to his father Hiranyakashipu -

jahy asuraa bhavam imaa tvam
atmanah samaa mano dhatsva na
santi vidvicah ete 'jitad atmana
utpathe sthitat
tad dhi hy anantasya mahat samarhaлам

- Srimad-Bhagavatam (7.8.9)

Translation by Parampujyapad Srimat Swami Maharaj- 'Prahlada

Maharaja continued: My dear father, please give up your demoniac mentality. Do not discriminate in your heart between enemies and friends; make your
mind equipoised toward everyone. Except for the uncontrolled and misguided mind, there is no enemy within this world. When one sees everyone on the platform of equality, one then comes to the position of worshiping the Lord perfectly.'

* * *

Devotion is of innumerable kinds, but Sree Rup Goswami and his great followers Sree Kaviraj Goswami Chief vaishnava personalities, have established the greatness of these five kinds of Divine Love. "Company of the saints, Nam Sankirtan, listening to Srimad Bhagavatam, residence in Mathura and service of the Deities with faith. But

ek ang sadhe kineka sadhe
bahu ang / ishtha haile upjai
premer tarang //

According to this statement for the rise of divine love the great necessity Bhajan with faith is a thoughtful subject. As wealth of Divine Love is the highest attainment, Sree Sanatan Goswami-pad had declared that only Nam Sankirtan is the most powerful and best means of acquaring the wealth of Divine Love.

* * *

There is permission of murti-puja in sanatan dharma. There is gulf of difference between murti-puja and idol worship. We are not idol worshippers. Supreme Lord is Supreme Person, Lord of all Lords. He is Transcendental

Spiritual Supreme Person. Personality is attributed to conscious principle and not to unconscious matter. Nobody on earth consider dead-body to be person. As long as consciousness, which has got thinking, feeling and willing, exists in the body, he is considered person. If an atomic part of the conscious energy of Supreme Lord is considered person, what is the difficulty in understanding Him, Who has got Absolute Existence, Absolute Knowledge and Absolute Bliss (Complete Sacidananda), as Supreme Person. There is no reason of not accepting Him as Supreme Person. Root cause of the appearance of Supreme Lord in this world is to remove extreme separation grief of Shuddha Bhakta. There are numerous avataras, but Sree Krishna is Original Bhagavan, 'self-manifesting Svayam Bhagavan'. Sree Krishna appears in His Transcendental Spiritual Form by the pure devotion in a pure devotee. If you worship the portraits of manifested deities Sree Guru Gauranga Radha-Krishna, installed by a pure devotee, even if you are unable to worship due to some physical or other kind of difficulty, there will be no serious offence, because you can remember that the deities are being worshipped in the temple where they are installed. In case when deities are installed as per prescript of Vaishnava Sastra, worship of those deities must be done without fail, as per regulation- Vaisnava Sriti, daily.

* * *

The pressure of repeated requests to write on Most Revered Puri Goswami Maharaj has an impact on my mind that most probably my Most Revered Siksha Guru, in view of His anxiety for my eternal welfare, is ordering me to pray for His grace, through his own persons. There is no doubt Param Pujyapad Puri Goswami Maharaj had some exceptional affection for me, for which I am not worthy to get. In fact, when Puri Goswami Maharaj was living, I cannot remember whether I did any service to Him. This is the best instance of realising that suddha bhakta's grace is always causeless. Although now we have got no direct contact with Him but indirectly He is doing everything. I have got no capacity to pay back my debt to Him, as I am incompetent in every aspect. I have got no realisation of His ontological aspect, but morphologically what I had seen, He was always performing all devotional functions sincerely and wholeheartedly and it was His desire that others should also be sincere in their worship of Sree Krishna. I accept

submissively with reverence, His advice to me in His affectionate letter dated 9/6/1995 - "There is no doubt Srila Gurudeva is always protecting you everywhere and will protect you in future. Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur and Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu expressed Their desire that Their message of Transcendental Divine Love should be propagated in all quarters of the globe. It is my belief, They will surely protect you.
Gurudeva, inspite of His disappearance is always regulating everything [His pastimes of appearance and disappearance are eternal]. You yourself said you had personal experience of it. Therefore, if you serve Them, taking shelter at Their Lotus Feet, there cannot be any impediment to your getting the objective.

I pay my innumerable prostrated obeisances to the Lotus Feet of Most Revered Siksha Guru Sreemat Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Maharaj to forgive me for my offences which I might have committed knowingly or unknowingly and always to shower His causeless mercy unto me so that I am capable of fulfilling the desire of Sree Guru and Gauranga.

* * *

It is very difficult for me to write about anything what you have written to me. Votaries of pure devotion of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's school of thought can do such abominable anti-devotional actions, is beyond imagination. Votaries of pure devotion must give up unrighteous sinful actions- prohibitions, namely viz. gambling, intoxication, illicit sex connection, and slaughter of animals. This human birth is not meant for eating, sleeping, defending and mating. Beasts and birds are after these. What is the specialty of human birth, if we do the same, sinful acts? Supreme Lord is not happy in creating aquatic animals, birds, beasts and ferocious animals. He is happy when He has created human being. Human being has got the discriminating power of good and bad, eternal and non-eternal. They can accept Eternal Truth Supreme Lord and give up non-eternal things of this world. A sincere seeker after Truth must have repentance. Due to bad impressions of their previous bad deeds, if they did any

bad action, they should repent for this and stop it immediately for their own eternal benefit and for the eternal benefit of others. Atleast for keeping the prestige of Guru, Vaishnavas and the prestige of the Institution established by Them, they should give up all malpractices. Example is better than precept.

I think you have understood the significance of my writing and think about it very seriously to keep the prestige of Guru-Vaishnavas and the renowned religious Institutions. Take absolute shelter to Supreme Lord Sri Guru-Gauranga and Radha-Krishna and pray for their grace wholeheartedly, so that you all can be rescued from your respective spiritual fall.

My love to you all.
Affectionately yours, Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

Essence of Srimad Bhagawatam

Rupa Goswami used to perform bhajan in a place near Ter Kadamba in Nandagaon. He would come practically every day to visit Sanatana Goswami when they were both in the area, for Rupa Goswami considered Sanatana Goswami to be his spiritual master. He began the Sri Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu by offering his obeisance's to Sanatana Goswami, his spiritual master. One day, Rupa Goswami wanted to offer some special prasadam to Sanatana. At that time, a very charming little gopi (cowherd girl) brought some milk, sugar, rice, ghee, camphor and saffron and said, "Why don't you cook this for your spiritual master?" But Rupa Goswami was so busy that the cowherd girl personally

cooked it. Rupa Goswami offered it to Sanatana, and they ate it together. The first taste of this khira (sweet rice), brought about uncontrollable ecstatic love; tears poured from their eyes, their hairs stood on end, they perspired, trembled, and rolled on the ground. Sanatana said, "Where did you get this sweet rice?"

"Oh! A little girl gave it to me. She cooked it with Her own hands." "Tell me about this girl." When he heard the description, Sanatana Goswami chastised Rupa Goswami, "You have caused me to accept service from our worshipable object of service, Vrindavaneshvari, Srimati Radharani." Rupa Goswami was very ashamed. But this is the way of Krishna Consciousness simultaneous joy and pain, meeting and separation. Though they were ashamed and feeling pain in their hearts due to having accepted service from Radharani, still they couldn't stop eating the sweet rice. And that sweet rice was putting them in realms of ecstasy that will never be understood. That night Rupa Goswami was lamenting, but Srimati Radharani personally appeared to him in a dream to pacify him and tell him it was Her desire to teach the world through Her devotees how a devotee does not want to accept service from the Lord, but simply wants to offer service without expecting anything in return. This is the essence of Srimad Bhagawatam.
On 19 Sep 07.

Eve of Janmastami

Our Most Revered Gurudeva, Nityalila Pravishta Om Vishnupada Sri Srimad Bhakti Dayita Madhava Gosvami Maharaja, Founder/President of Sri Caitanya Gaudiya Math institution, established this Calcutta Math, and his objects of worship, Sri Sri Guru-Gauranga-Radha-Nayananatha Jiu, appeared here by dint of his devotion. He installed the Deities during the winter season. Thereafter, our Gurudeva introduced two five-day religious meetings in the Calcutta Math, to celebrate the occasions of the anniversary of the installation of the Deities and Sri Krishna Janmashtami, the advent anniversary of Sri Krishna. At that time, when he was living on this earth, we were under him directly, so we had no worries. Whatever he directed was directed by Supreme Lord Sri Krishna.

Gurudeva is the absolute counterpart of the Supreme Lord, and we were not to be worried. But, after his disappearance, we could not see him physically although, indirectly, he was still directing everything. As God is eternal, His absolute counterpart is also eternal. As long as there is the sun, the light of the sun, the quality of the sun will also be there. If the sun is eternal, its light will also be eternal. Like that, the Supreme Lord is the Supreme Eternal Entity and, therefore, His absolute counterpart is also eternal. He is grace incarnate. He graces all the deserving enslaved jivas of this world.

By the grace of the Supreme Lord, we can see that His grace incarnate is the bona fide guru, His personal associate. Gurudeva, the grace incarnate of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna Gauraìga Mahaprabhu, appeared and put his holy footprints in our own place. I had no knowledge of Gaudiya Math, but he attracted me. He is the expansion of Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Caitanya Mahaprabhu sent His own personal associate here. Gurudeva also went to many different places and rescued many fallen souls. We have to remember Gurudeva. Without his grace, without submission to him, without sincere belief in him, we cannot have any kind of contact with Krishna.

Throughout the infinite planets, you will find all the pastimes of Sri Krishna going on continuously, one after another. In this sense, His appearance pastime is eternal:

ei-mata brahmanda-madhye sabara `parakasa'
sapta-dvipe nava-khande yaìhara vilasa
sarvatra prakasa tanra—bhakte sukha dite
jagatera adharma nasi' dharma sthapite

Caitanya Caritamrita, Madhya-lila 20.218-219)

There are infinite brahmandas and infinite planets—so many that we cannot even conceive of them. Somewhere within these brahmandas, He is appearing continuously. So, in this sense, His appearance is eternal. But He also appears, reveals Himself, in the sanctified heart of the suddha bhakta. This is also His eternal appearance. We have to prepare ourselves so that Krishna will think us to be qualified to get Him. Then He will appear in our hearts. Today is the day before Janmashtami—"adhivasa". "Adhivasa" means that we have some prior duty to perform before His appearance, so that we will be ready for Him. We have to sanctify our hearts so that Krishna can appear there. Krishna is already

there, but we are not aware of His presence.

ceto darpana marjanaà bhava-maha—davagni nirvapanam
sreyah-kairava-candrika-vitaranaà vidya-vadhu-jivanam
anandambudhi-vardhanaà prati-padaà pürnamritasvadanaà
sarvatma-snapanaà paraà vigayate sri-krishna-saìkirtanam
(Sikshashtaka 1)

Supreme Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu wrote this verse thereby instructing us how to attain the association of Krishna. How can Krishna appear in us? What do we have to do?

"Sri-krishna-sankirtanam": chant the Holy Names of Sri-Krishna. Then you will get everything. "You do not need to do anything to purify your mind, except to go on chanting `Radha-Krishna', Hare Krishna mahamantra. Everything will come to you." We say this repeatedly with our words but, in practice, we have no belief.

The Supreme Lord will descend into our hearts—will be revealed in our hearts—when we actually and sincerely take absolute shelter at His lotus feet. He will reveal Himself to the surrendered soul. If we chant with bonafide submission, we will find that everything is there in the Holy Name—Form, Attributes, everything. The Name is saccidananda. Krishna is saccidananda. This realization will descend into our hearts. We might think that we will get Him by our own capacity, but He is not subservient to us. He is Self-effulgent, Self-luminous like the sun.

Svami Maharaja (Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Svami Maharaja) used to say, "If one is enlightened by that knowledge by which ignorance is destroyed, then that knowledge reveals everything, just as the sun illuminates everything at daybreak." When the sun rises, he shows himself and everything else in proper perspective. We think harinama to be material sound and that we can get Krishna by our own capacity. No! If we submit to God and His absolute counterpart, then all will be revealed.

We cannot bribe the Supreme Lord. Everything is within Him, there is nothing outside Him. Dhruva Maharaja received the grace of the Supreme Lord. We are uttering the Name and we are not getting this grace. Why? "He is not gracing us!" we complain. No, no. The sun is giving light to all. It is shining in the filthy

place, the clean place—everywhere. Some are taking advantage of it, but the majority is not. Nonetheless, we complain, "The sun is not blessing us." Dhruva had firm belief. His faith was without a trace of doubt. "My mother told me that, by crying the Name of Sri Hari, I shall get Sri Hari." He was crying, crying, crying continuously. We are not doing this. He was continuously uttering the Holy Name, completely absorbed in Hari and, whatever he saw, whether a lion, crocodile or any other beast, he embraced. They did no harm to him as he was protected from all danger. However, we have difficulty believing this. Ultimately, he received the grace of Narada Gosvami.

That was an example from Srimad Bhagavatam but, in this Kali-yuga, when we were once in Punjab, a very astounding event took place. A devotee woman was traveling by rickshaw from her shop to a remote place, about two miles away. She was wearing many gold ornaments. She traveled for some time along the well-populated road when suddenly the rickshaw driver turned away from the main road, toward a field. "Why are you going across this field?" the lady protested. "That is the way, over there."

"No," the rickshaw driver said, "I am taking a shortcut. We will go this way." He would not heed the woman's words.

Then, the woman became afraid, thinking, "I am wearing so many golden ornaments. The driver must be greedy for them. He will rob me and kill me." For this reason, she jumped from the rickshaw and started to run away, shouting, "Hah Govinda! Hah Govinda!" This is fact. We were there at the time.

To save herself, she jumped into a well. In terror, she remained in the well throughout the night, all the time uttering, "Hah Govinda!" At dawn, the next morning, many people from the village came for their morning walk. They heard the sound of a woman's voice uttering the Holy Name. "What is this?" they asked. They followed the voice to the well and found the woman who was crying, "Hah Govinda! Hah Govinda!" An extremely poisonous snake was swimming around her, circling her. "What is this?" they wondered. Then, they saw the rickshaw. A man holding a dagger lay next to it—dead. A great cry rose from the crowd and many people gathered from different places to see what had happened. By now, it was daylight and, as people came to the woman's aid, the snake left.

All the witnesses at the scene said they had never seen that snake before and,

since that time, they have never seen it again. When the rickshaw driver went to kill the woman with his dagger, the snake bit him and injected him with venom, killing him instantly. After that, the same snake protected the woman throughout the night by circling her, so that no one could come near. The woman had firm belief. She did not utter any other name, only, "Govinda! Govinda! Govinda!" Even in this Kali-yuga, you can find such an event. Therefore, you should have belief.

Janmashtami and other auspicious functions at the Math are "hari-smarana-mahotsava" (grand celebrations dedicated to the remembrance of Hari). You will find, in a certain hymn, that the entire purpose of performing bhajana is to remember Krishna. We shall destroy all evil thoughts by remembering Krishna. We shall get everything by remembering. But, it is said in the scripture called Vaishnava Cintamani, that it is not easy to remember, to meditate, with this material mind. It is very difficult. All the sins, vices and evil thoughts will be destroyed by remembrance of Krishna, but it is not so easy. But we can remember Krishna if we utilize our lips to utter His Name. By moving these lips, we can obtain eternal benefit, but, unfortunately, we have no aptitude for this. We cannot remember Krishna by means of the material mind.

When we are able to remember Krishna by loudly and continuously performing harinama, and that remembrance is revealed in our hearts, then we will be entitled to perform bhajana in a secluded place, but not now. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is teaching us. Our Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura is teaching us. If our Gurudeva ever saw some devotees dancing and chanting the Holy Name, he would show them great respect. "They are expressing their hearts! Hari bol!" In order to gain some respect, name and fame, I was also dancing. "Ah! Very good!" Gurudeva would say. He would be pleased with me, although I was doing it to receive praise. Inside, I had no feeling, no want for Krishna, and no perturbation of heart. I did it only to get respect from others. Nonetheless, Gurudeva was so satisfied. Why? This you have to understand. "Kirtana prabhave smarana haibe" (Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Thakura). Remembrance of Bhagavan comes from constant chanting of the Holy Name.

Prahalada told all the demon boys, "Why are you afraid? There is no difficulty in worshipping Krishna. You should just utter the Name. You are calling your father and your mother without difficulty. Call Him and He will be satisfied. There is no difficulty. He is within you. He has affection for you. You will find the affection of crores of mothers in Sri Hari." Here in this world, one always

encounters difficulty when trying to please another person, but Krishna is not at all difficult to please. With a sincere heart, utter His Name.

In your household life, you wile away the time for nothing, for worldly things. If you are also gossiping about these things here in the temple, then why have you come? The temple is for the worship of Krishna, nothing else. You should think about this. Why have you come here? Have you spent so much money to come here only to gossip about worldly things?

What is bhagavan-bhajana?

sravanam kirtanam dhyanam harer adbhuta-karmanah
janma-karma-gunanam ca tad-arthe 'khila-ceshtitam
(Srimad Bhagavatam, 11.3.27)

Once, our Guru Maharaja was in Vraja-mandala performing parikrama. Generally, our Guru Maharaja would remain in front to perform kirtana, guiding the other devotees. On this particular occasion, Guru Maharaja was held up with work at some place and would not be able to come until later. At the front of the procession, all the Vaishnavas were chanting the Holy Name and the others were answering him back. But, at the back of the procession, there were so many devotees who were idly gossiping about worldly things. They did not know that Guru Maharaja was coming up from the rear. When Guru Maharaja came up to them, he said, "Oh! Your whole life's fortune has been destroyed! At this great procession you are also gossiping about worldly things? Then they quickly started chanting, "Radhe Govinda! Radhe Govinda!" What is the reason why we have spent so much money to come and be here? Is it to give our energy to worldly things? If we hear about Krishna, we shall go to Krishna. If we hear about worldly things, we shall go to worldly things. If we sing about Krishna, we shall go to Krishna. If we speak about Krishna, we shall go to Krishna. If we remember Krishna, our minds will go there. If we devote all our sense organs for the service of Sri Krishna, we shall go to Him. This is called bhajana. If we go on expending all our energy for worldly things, while remaining externally in the Math, what benefit will we receive?
Tomorrow, Krishna will appear. He will appear in the shrine of our hearts. He is there within us and He will appear there. So, today, on this adhivasa tithi, we have to clear the heart and mind so that Krishna will come and sit there. Krishna does not take His seat in an impure, dirty place. Krishna is the Holiest. We have to prepare our hearts, purify our hearts. There should be no desire other than the

service of Sri Krishna. If there should be any other desire, then that heart is impure. As long as impure thoughts are there, Krishna will not appear.

In Purushottama-dhama (Puri), during the time of the car festival (Ratha-yatra), Lord Jagannatha travels from His temple in Puri to the Gundica Temple, a distance of about two miles. Caitanya Mahaprabhu explains that the Gundica Temple is Vrindavana and the Jagannatha Temple is Kurukshetra. During a solar eclipse, people go to Kurukshetra to bathe and perform other rituals. In the scriptures, you will find descriptions of the immense glories of this practice. During the time of Krishna's pastimes on Earth, there was a solar eclipse where Krishna came from Dvaraka to Kurukshetra with all His personal associates. At that time, Krishna was the King, Emperor and Sole Proprietor of Dvaraka. All His subjects, consorts and personal associates were very eager to go to Kurukshetra during the solar eclipse so they could bathe, perform sandhya and other rituals. If they could perform these sacrifices with the brahmanas, they could get immense fruits. To fulfill this desire of His subjects, Krishna said, "All right, we shall go." So, all the numerous subjects, consorts and personal associates came to Kurukshetra. Krishna intentionally invited everyone except the Vrajavasis—the devotees of Vraja. Narada Gosvami was very shocked by this. He approached Krishna, saying, "The Vrajavasis love You so much. They are experiencing extreme separation grief by not seeing You. You are inviting everyone in the whole world but You are not inviting the Vrajavasis? What offense are they guilty of? Have they committed an offense by loving You? I cannot tolerate this!"

Then Krishna said, "They are our own people. No one has to send invitations to one's own. Parents do not invite their children, and vice versa. They are our own. Outside people are invited. How can I invite the Vrajavasis? You are right, I intentionally did not invite them because they are saturated with love for Me. They have no interest in performing sacrifices to obtain mundane benefits. If they come, the results of all these ritual practices will be destroyed. For this reason, I have not invited them."

Although not invited, the Vrajavasis came to learn that Krishna was coming to Kurukshetra. The Vrajavasis thought, "Kurukshetra is much closer to Vraja-mandala than Dvaraka is. We should avail ourselves of this rare opportunity to see Krishna! We can have darsana of Krishna! We should not miss this chance!"

But they could not venture to go there. Why? They thought, "Krishna has

become the Emperor. His standard is very high, and we are merely cowherd men and women. We are poor people. Perhaps Krishna has forgotten us. If we go there, He will not recognize us. Someone of such a high position will not come to see ordinary people like us. Previously He was a cowherd boy in our Vraja-dhama, but now He has become King. But we are extremely grief-stricken. We cannot tolerate this separation."

Thinking like this, the Vrajavasis reasoned, "A man might forget everything else, but he will never forget his parents, even if they live far away. If Nanda Maharaja and Yasoda go there, then Krishna will bow down to them and make obeisances." So they went to Nanda Maharaja, saying, "Krishna is coming to Kurukshetra! We are too grief-stricken with separation grief. We have not seen Him for such a long time, but we do not have the courage to go there. We do not know if Krishna will give us the opportunity to see Him, as His present standard of living is so high. But, if His parents go there, then Krishna will come to them as their son and offer obeisances."

Then Nanda Maharaja and Yasoda said, "No, no. This is not correct. He has not come here for such a long time! He has so many consorts and servants serving Him there. He is so wealthy now. His wives are also wealthy. We are only cowherd men and women. We have nothing. After so long, how can we go? If we go there, will He come to see us? If we go to Kurukshetra and are deprived of seeing Krishna, we shall die!"

When Krishna, the Emperor of Dvaraka, entered Kurukshetra, so many cavalry units, elephants, horses, etc. accompanied Him. Only those who had permission were allowed to go to speak with Him. He was surrounded by servants. There were four gatekeepers, one in each direction. The King's parents, Vasudeva and Devaki were also there. The brahmanas had gone to start the sacrifices. So, no one was permitted to disturb the King.

Nanda Maharaja, Yasoda Devi and all the cowherd boys and other friends of Krishna approached where He was. Nobody acknowledged them. Armed forces, cavalry and elephants surrounded Krishna.

Nanda Maharaja approached one of the guards. "I have come to see my beloved son," he said.

"Who is your beloved son?" a guard asked him.

"Krishna."

"How is that? You are a poor person. He is the King! His parents are already here—Vasudeva and Devaki. We do not believe you! From where have you come? Why are you claiming that He is your son? We do not believe you!"

Nanda Maharaja cried, "I shall die!"

The guard said, "I am doing my work as per the order of the King. If I do anything against His orders, I shall be dismissed. Do you have a permit?"

"No."

"Then I cannot let you in," the guard replied.

Then all the cowherd boys, carrying their small cow prods, cried, "My friend! My bosom friend! Kanhaiya!"

"What? He is the King! His friends are like this? You are paupers! I do not believe you!"

Then the gopis cried, "We are the consorts of Krishna!"

"What? The consorts are already here. Satyabhama, Rukmini and all the other queens are here! From where have you come? Show me some permit from the King or His Prime Minister!"

Then, Yasoda Devi said, "I told you that, if I go to Kurukshetra and I am deprived of seeing Krishna, I shall die! I have nothing left.

My life is finished!" She cried loudly, "Gopala!" and fell unconscious. At that time, Krishna was with the brahmanas, who requested Him to start the sacrifice. Krishna removed all His royal garments and became a small, naked boy, crying, "Mother! O Mommy! Mommy! Mommy!" He cried and cried and cried and ran to sit on the lap of Yasoda Devi. Now, without Krishna's presence, all the ritual sacrifices were destroyed. By hearing one single call from Yasoda Devi, Krishna could not remain there.

Then Krishna met the gopis and the others. The gopis attracted Krishna. They said, "We are not very happy seeing You here. There are so many cavalrymen, elephants and chariots—we should go to Vrindavana. There, it is sweet. All this is Your majestic aspect.

So, please allow us the opportunity to see You in better circumstances by coming with us to Vrindavana. Please do not remain here! "He Gopinatha! He Gopinatha! Vrindavane calo! He Gopinatha!"

In that mood of the gopis, saturated with gopi-bhava, Caitanya Mahaprabhu pulled the chariot from the Jagannatha Temple (Kurukshetra) toward Gundica (Vrindavana). During the chariot festival, Krishna, Baladeva and Subhadra make the trip in three chariots. The day before the festival, Caitanya Mahaprabhu told the devotees, "You see, Krishna will come to the Gundica Temple tomorrow. You must come with Me and cleanse the temple." "Cleansing the temple" means that you must remove all the thorns and rubbish outside and trim the grass. You must clear the path of any stones and sweep away all the dust with a broom. But it also means that you are to engage your sense organs for the service of Krishna. If you do not engage your sense organs for Him, you will not get Him. For this reason, you have to clear your heart of all desire for the attainment of material benefits, both here and in the hereafter, in heaven. If such desire is there, Krishna will not come. The desire for non-eternal benefits and emancipation, the desire to merge yourself in formless Brahman, the desire to merge yourself in Paramatma, these sorts of desires will deter you from going to Krishna. Krishna will not come to you. For this reason, you have to clear all of this away—these desires are like hard stones.

Outside, you clear them away with brooms, and all the devotees bring earthen pots full of water to wash everything. After this, there should be no desire for name and fame and other such things. All of this should be totally removed. For this reason, Caitanya Mahaprabhu, with the help of His own uttri (the cloth that a sannyasi wears around his neck), scrubbed the inside of the temple. There should not be any kind of material desires within the heart, not even those hidden secretly. Then Krishna will come tomorrow.

Krishna is coming here from the Jagannatha Temple, and you have to clear these unwanted things away. This means that you have to clear your mind. There should be no other desire except desire for Krishna. Krishna is coming to Vrindavana. Krishna is the only Autocrat there. No other ideas, forces or persons

should dominate your heart, except Krishna. So, you have to make your heart the same as Vrindavana, where Krishna is solely dominant. He is the Sole Proprietor.

Caitanya Mahaprabhu says, "I have made this mind Vrindavana, so that Krishna will be free—free to perform all His pastimes and sporting activities." You have to make your mind Vrindavana. No one else should be allowed to enter, and no other thoughts should be allowed. Now you are staying in a room and outside you have placed a big sign that says, "Welcome." So, others see the sign and say, "Oh, welcome," and they come to your door. But the door is closed and, behind the door, there are many chairs, tables etc. In fact, the room is completely filled with furniture! They cannot even open the door. So, they go away, disappointed. Outside, your sign says, "Welcome," and you are thinking that you are welcoming Krishna. But, when Krishna comes, you have thoughts in your mind of wife, children, house, money, name, fame and other things. All these things have filled up your heart. Krishna will come and then go back. You have to clear your mind, your heart, for Him. Clear away all attachment to non-eternal things. Then Krishna will come tomorrow.

We have to perform harinama. This is the best method. So, in these days leading up to the advent of Sri Krishna, we should perform harinama saìkirtana. We should not do this to show off to others. We have to do our own bhajana. We must call and call Krishna from the core of the heart. The days should be spent performing sankirtana. Then our minds will be cleansed and Krishna may appear. If you want Krishna, you have to remove all things that are not Krishna. This is "adhivasa".

Caitanya Mahaprabhu has taught us that you will get everything, all kinds of attainments, by means of the Holy Name. He made all the devotees chant the Holy Name, being careful to avoid the tenfold offenses. You are not to engage in meditation or any other kind of practice. Your mind will be cleansed. All the unwanted desires will be removed: "ceto darpana marjanam". You have multifarious desires but, if you perform sankirtana, the first attainment is that your desires will be removed. When these desires are gone, so too will be the pangs of threefold suffering—miseries. The desires are the miseries. As long as you have desires, should there be some hindrance to the fulfillment of these desires, your mind will become upset. For this reason, when the desires are removed, there will be no afflictions and Krishna will appear. Krishna is All-Good. After that, you will have a relationship with Krishna, thinking, "I am of

Krishna." With love, you will utter the Holy Name and you will be drowned in the ocean of ambrosia—bliss—and, at every step, you will have the taste of that sweet transcendental ambrosia of the Supreme Lord.

Everything happens by Supreme Lord's Will

We should not be disappointed by the happenings of the world and give up our Bhajan. This world is the place of turmoil and disturbances caused by the illusory energy of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. Only a completely surrendered soul can emancipate himself from the grip of this illusory energy and surmount the ocean of births and deaths- threefold afflictions. We are to practice six-fold Sharanagati, which is the basis of devotional life. Without Sharanagati, there cannot be Bhakti.

We should not be perturbed by mundane, worldly loss and gain. We should be very careful about the eternal benefit of the real self, which will go with us. Whatever is done by the Will of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, Who is All-Good, is for the eternal benefit of all. Jivas reap the fruits of their own karma. Nobody is to be blamed for this. We should not be perturbed under any circumstance and give up Bhajan in our short duration of stay in this transitory world. A completely surrendered soul is always protected and maintained by Sri Krishna. There is no cause of anxiety to him. He remains calm under all circumstances. We cannot see adjustment and cannot find solution by our own capacity. Total unconditional submission is the only way of solving all problems. Jivas commit offence at the Lotus Feet of Sri Krishna, when they, being eternal servants of Sri Krishna, become averse to Him. As long as Jivas will not remove this offence, there will be no practical solution. Maya will surely envelope them and there will be desire for enjoyment, which will hurl them down to hell - intense suffering.

Four Qualities of Devotees

"Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu preached the All-Embracing and All-Accommodating Gospel of Divine Love, i.e. Love for Supreme Lord Sree Krishna and all in relation to Sree Krishna. The sincere devotees who preach this All-Embracing Gospel of Divine Love, how can they have incompatibilities amongst them? A real sadhu sees adjustment in all circumstances, even in contrary circumstances. Actually when we miss the target, everything becomes chaos. Target should be- pure causeless devotion to Sree Krishna for His satisfaction only.
There should not be any ulterior desire in the mind. Actually realized sincere souls are very scarce in this world. The novice who has started bhajan, can get this elevated state gradually, of course, by the grace of Guru, Vaishnav and Bhagavan. I am encouraged to know that the duties of different Maths or institutions gather together and are doing bhajan unitedly. This is good for them and also for the eternal benefit of others, who will be encouraged to see this ideal. Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has emphatically said in His writing about, the four qualities of devotees to do Harinam- he should be humbler than the blade of grass, more tolerant than a tree, should give respect to all and should not desire to get respect from others. By only memorizing these we will not get the actual benefit if we do not practice.
Example is better than precept".

From the letters

You are well versed in devotional conclusive thoughts of Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and you can make her understand correctly in your language.

You are to make her understand that in India, as per injunction of the scriptures, no female devotee should be invested with sacred thread in which 'Hom' (offering ghee to fire) is performed. Only competent male members can get investment of sacred thread as per direction of Guru, but that is not exclusively necessary for bhajan, Chanting of the Holy Name is the only way to get the highest objective- Krishna Prema in Kaliyuga- blackage.

We can give the illustration of the holy biography and teachings of Namacharya Haridas Thakur. I have heard from our Guruvarga that Vaishnavism has got some similarity with the teachings of Jesus Christ. It is important to practise pure devotion in the company of a pure devotee. 'Example is better that precept'.

Accept my dandvat
pranam.

Affectionately yours,
Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

* * *

There is a great value in having the company of the saints and the scriptures, without mixing with the robbery of this material world. What is present here at this moment becomes nothing at the next. We are not of this world full of treachery. We are disgusted with the treacherous aspect of the world that charms us and engages us in a treacherous soil. Now something - next moment, nothing. We must give that up and try for something substantial: sat, cit, anandam - eternal existence, uncontaminated consciousness, and finally, the fulfillment of all our inner necessities - the corresponding engagement of the whole of our existence. Prati anga lagi kande, prati anga mora - "Every part of my being cries for the corresponding part of Him." (Jnana Dasa.) And Krsna says, "Only I can give you complete fulfillment, so come to Me and give up everything else":

sarva-dharman parityajya, mam ekam saranam vraja aham tvam sarva-papebhyo, moksayisyami ma sucah (Bg. 18.66)

hen we can neglect the proposal of emancipation, we might think that we possess a speck of real devotion. In the face of devotion, emancipation is belittled as very lowly (moksa- laghuta-krt, B.r.s. Purva, 1.14). Yet, devotion is so rarely to be found, we may not expect that we have attained it (sudurllabha, ibid.). In one word, when we say that we have some devotion, we are not in devotion. Rather, when we can feel that we have nothing, although we have no aspiration for any other thing, at that point we may be making some progress.

We do genuinely want something, although we can't clearly understand what; but we appreciate the devotees and the divine scriptures of devotion. When our appreci-ation is on that side, yet we feel we are bereft, that is a sober and healthy position. So vacant. We ought to remember that although we are negative, infinitesimal parts, we have come forward for a relationship with the Infinite, the Absolute. What price should we be prepared to pay for that? What form does that price take? We ought not to purchase such a thing very cheaply. To serve the devotees will be tangible, and to continue with the devotional practices and program that has been recommended by the scriptures and saints is most important. To go on - that in itself should be our reward. We are reading about Him, we are serving the saints and hearing their words. This is an engagement in itself. If we are thus satisfied, we have something that must not be underestimated.

From the letters of Srila Gurudeva

I have been totally entangled in mundane difficulties which have no end, I do not deserve forgiveness for acts I have committed and for my irresolution...

My Dear *** Das,
Received your letter dated 10th April, 2001 and noted the contents. We had seen you actively participating in our first preaching-tour in Russia and sponsoring the first tour in Russia. I became worried when I did not see your participation in our next tour programme in Russia. When I inquired about you, I was told that you were in great difficulty regarding mundane problems. You were so enthusiastic in attending all programmes in the first tour, but your absence in the last tour-programme disappointed me.
This material world is full of problems. Nobody on earth can avoid it. There are ups and downs in this world. Supreme Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has said – This world is forest fire and doing the Holy Name — Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare // Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare — Mahamantra, will extinguish the forest fire. The difference between a realized soul and conditioned souls in this world is that the realized soul, by the grace of Supreme Lord, has got the capacity to tolerate all afflictions and tribulations, but a conditioned soul cannot. A conditioned soul remaining in darkness cannot solve any problem. When light comes, problems created by darkness are automatically removed. Parampujyapad Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj in one of his sermons said – When one is enlightened by knowledge by which ignorance is destroyed, then his knowledge reveals everything as sun lights up everything at daytime. Supreme Lord, who is All-Bliss, is self-effulgent. He descends to a completely surrendered soul. As for instance, Prahlad Maharaj, who was apparently in the grief of extreme torture by his own father and was surrounded by hostile demons, was always in peace because of his total submission to Supreme Lord Sree Krishna, he never became unbalanced. Our Most Revered Gurudeva used to advise us – Finite human beings, when they take any decision by their finite intellect and wisdom for their benefit, they commit mistakes and the result is reverse. If we take absolute shelter to The Lotus Feet of Guru-Vaishnava-Bhagawan, then by Their grace, light of transcendental knowledge will descend to our heart and solve all problems. In my life I have practical experience of it. I think Sreepad *** Maharaj has already advised you to remember four Narasimha mantras as well as after that Panchatattva and Mahamantra, each four times before going to bed, after rising up from bed and also if possible while going out to do any work. It is better to utter those mantras so that the holy sound will purify the atmosphere, remove obstacles and bestow you the mental power to tolerate.
I am now very busy in my extensive tour-programme in North India with a big party. By the grace of Sree Guru and Gauranga, preaching programmes at

Allahabad (U.P), Chandigarh, Kurali and Ropar (Punjab) were grandly successful. We are leaving Ropar this morning for Jalandhar. After Jalandhar we shall go to Hoshiarpur, Ludhiana, Jagadhari, Dehra Dun etc. Supreme Lord Sree Krishna willing I may reach Russia for preaching-tour between 17th August and 10th September. At that time by His will if I can come in contact with you, I shall speak to you and hear from you.
May Supreme Lord Sree Gauranga Mahaprabhu and Radha-Krishna bless you. My love to you.

Affectionately yours,
Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

Ganga Mata Goswamini

An important element of devotional service is the regular observance of Vaishnavas' appearance and disappearance days. On these occasions one should remember them, pray for their mercy and glorify their qualities in kirtana.

There was a deity of Krishna named Rasika Ray in the house of Chandra Sharma, a resident of Jaipur in Rajasthan. As a result of sevapradha, offences in the performance of service to this deity, this Brahmin had no descendants to continue the family line. Jagannatha Deva appeared to him in a dream and told him to bring the deity to Puri and give to Ganga Mata if he wished to be rid of the effects of his offences. The Brahmin did as he was told and appeared at Ganga Mata's door to offer her the service of Rasika Ray. At first she was not ready to accept, as it was impossible for her to give the kind of royal service that was due such a deity. Finally, the Brahmin simply hid the deity amongst the tulasi bushes and went away. Rasika Ray appeared to Ganga Mata in a dream and told her that he wanted her to accept and serve him. Having been so ordained, Ganga Mata joyfully took the deity in and organized a festival in his honor.

At present there are five pairs of deities in the Ganga Mata Math: Sree Sree

Radha Rasika Ray, Sree Sree Radha Shyamsundar, Sree Sree Radha Madana Mohan, Sree Sree Radhavinoda and Sree Sree Radharaman. Other than these, the Damodar Shalagram Shila of Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, a dancing figure of Sree Gauranga, and a Gopal deity are also present on the altar.

According to the information given by the Math, Ganga Mata was born on the Shukla Dashmi of Jayestha in AD 1601 and entered the eternal pastimes in AD 1721. Branches of her Math are found in Jagannath Puri at the Haveli Math and Gopal Math, as well as the Gopal Math in Tangi village in Cuttack district.

Devotees of Krishna may be born in any race, in any caste, or indeed in either sex. They are still to be considered the best of human beings and worshipable by all. There are many examples of women who attained the supreme achievement of pure devotional service to the Lord, such as wives of the Vedic Brahmins who due to the demands of bhakti ignored the orders of their less-advanced husbands to serve Krishna. In the Kaliyuga, also, as a result of the blessings of Hari Das Thakur, a prostitute was transformed into a renowned Vaishnavi and many great devotees went to seek audiences from her in order to receive her saintly association.

---*A discourse by Srila Gurudeva on the appearance day of Ganga Mata Goswamini.*

Gauranga-naagari-vaad (Pseudo-sect doctrine) Refutation

sva-madhurya radha-prema-rasa asvadite
radha-bhava angi kariyache bhala-mate
gopi-bhava yate prabhu dhariyache ekanta
vrajendra-nandane mane apanara kanta
gopika-bhavera ei sudridha niscaya
vrajendra-nandana vina anyatra na haya

Sri Caitanya Caritamrita (Adi, 17/276-278)

Significance: Nandanandan Krishna with the desire to feel His own wonderful transcendental sweetness relished by Sri Radhika through pure love, appeared as Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu accepting the complexion and mode of worship of Srimati Radhika. The special characteristic of Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu, for which He appeared, should not be distorted. His munificent pastimes of distributing highest Krishna-prema to all and His intense love for Krishna in separation must be retained. Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu's gopibhava is very firm and absolutely unwavering but 'gopibhava' cannot be evolved without relation to Brajendranandan Krishna as the object of worship.

Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur's own writing in his commentary (Anubhasya) of the above three payars (verses) - Acceptance of two aspects Vishaya and Ashraya is essential for Krishna-prema.

(1) Vishaya- Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, as possessor of the complete internal spiritual potency

(2) Asraya- Radha, as complete internal spiritual potency of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna

[Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu made the pastimes of relishing most secret prem-rasa of Radha only with Sri Swarup Damodar and Sri Rai Ramananda at the holy residence of Sri Kasi Misra- Gambhira, at Puri, Orissa, India, during His last duration of 12 years and not with any other personal associates. This proves that how serious and strict He was in regard to this.]

Therefore, Caitanya Mahaprabhu did not play the pastimes of an Enjoyer-befitting and similar to Krishna for viewing etc., any woman- female-consort, relinquishing the mode of worship of Radhika and other gopis and giving in any way His support to lothario Nagar sect (Gaurnagarvad). Worldly veritable lustful persons belonging to lothario 'sahajiya' pseudo sect in their attempt to assign their own contemptible lust desire transgression upon Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu, who made the pastimes of being an ideal Acarya, also committed serious offence at the lotus feet of Most Revered Vrindavan Das Thakur.

Vrindavan Das Thakur's own writing in Caitanya Bhagavat, Adi, 15/17, 28-31

vide Sri Saraswati Goswami Thakur's elaborate commentary (Gaudiya Bhasya) about Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu- He has never poked fun to any female-consort, He remains aloof from woman. Without paying heed to woman, He made the pastimes of childlike frolicsomeness with all. It is known to all that in this Avatara, He does not even hear the name of woman. Therefore highly glorious and majestic persons never use the word Gauranga-Nagar in their prayers to Him. Although all prayers may be probable for Him, yet the wise sing His habitual natural supramundane qualities.

Giriraja-Govardhana

Appearance of Govardhana and appellation of "Giriraj"

The appearance of Sri Govardhana in this world and how He acquired the appellation of "Giriraja" is described in the Garga-samhita (Vrndavana-khanda, chapter 2) of Sri Gargacarya in the conversation between Nanda Maharaja and his senior advisor, the gopa Sananda. Sananda spoke to Nanda Maharaja giving reference to the conversation between Pandu and Bhisma.

Desiring to appear in this world to allay the earth‘s burden of grave sins committed by the demoniac, Sri Krsna directed Radhika to appear in this world. However, Radharani expressed Her unwillingness to go to a place where Vrndavana, Yamuna and Sri Govardhana were not present. Sri Krsna then sent His own Transcendental Spiritual Realm of Vraja-dhama, an area of 84 krosa or 252 kilometers (1 krosa is equal to 3 kilometers), to descend to India in this world. Vraja-dhama is not a part of the material world consisting of earth, water, fire, air and sky. Govardhana appeared as the son of the mountain Drona in Salmali Island in western India. All the demigods were exceedingly delighted at the appearance of Govardhana and showered down flowers.

All the big mountains such as the Himälayas and Sumeru were happy to hear about Govardhana‘s appearance. They came to pay their homage to Govardhana and to worship Him. In their prayers they said, "Since Govardhana is the holy

place of pastimes of the Supreme Lord Sri Krsna in the Transcendental Sweet Realm of Goloka, He is the King of all mountains and the crown of Goloka. He is like an umbrella for Parabrahman Sri Krsna and Vrndavana is within His lap." Since then, Govardhana has been renowned as "Giriraja."

Pulastya Muni is one of the seven mind-born sons of Brahma known as the Manasa-Putra. Once upon a time, Pulastya Muni was traveling on pilgrimage and came to Salmali Island. There, he was astonished and charmed to see the extraordinary beauty of Govardhana mountain adorned with a variety of fruit and flower trees, pleasant sitting places, springs, radishes, soft grass, etc. When Pulastya Muni approached Dronacala, he was worshipped by Dronacala. Pulastya Muni said to Drona, "I live in Kashi which has special significance due to the presence of the Ganges and Visvesvara Mahadeva. Sinners go there to get salvation, but my desire is to perform penance there after installing Govardhana". Although extremely worried due to his affection for the child, Dronacala was fearful of being cursed by Pulastya Muni and directed the child to go to the holy land of Bharata (India) with the Muni. Initially, Govardhana was 64 miles long, 40 miles wide and 16 miles high [The present length of Govardhana is approximately 7 miles]. The question arose as to how the Muni would carry the big mountain Govardhana. Pulastya Muni said that he could easily carry the mountain on the palm of his hand. Govardhana agreed to go with the Muni on the condition that if he put Him anywhere on the ground while going, Govardhana would remain there due to His great weight and would not move. Pulastya Muni accepted the condition and promised to carry the mountain to the destination without putting Him down on the land. The Muni then began to move slowly to his destination while carrying Govardhana on the palm of his right hand. But when the Muni reached Vraja-dhama, Govardhana saw the Yamuna and Vrndavana and remembered the sweet pastimes of Krsna. He wanted to remain there and therefore became very heavy. The Muni became very much distressed and, forgetting his promise, put the mountain down on the land. After finishing his daily evacuation, bath and sandhya-puja (silent recitation of prayers), Pulastya Muni returned to the place and asked Govardhana to sit on the palm of his hand. Govardhana, however, expressed His reluctance at moving. Pulastya Muni tried his best to lift the mountain but was unable to move Him. He became enraged and cursed Govardhana that He would diminish in size everyday according to the measure of one sesame seed.

The present diminished Govardhana is about 7 miles long. As long as Govardhana exists, the current black age of Kali-yuga will not be able to show

its paramount power. But after thousands of years when Govardhana and the Yamuna have disappeared, Kali will be vehemently strong and all living beings will be oppressed and tortured to the extreme. The plight of human beings will then be precarious.

God as the centre

When there are different centres of interests, nobody can avoid clashes between individuals, groups, nations etc. For example, if circles are drawn with different centres, the circumferences are bound to cross each other. But if there is one centre of interest, smaller and bigger circles can exist without crossing. According to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, there should be knowledge of the real self, real interest and one centre of interest. Only God can be the common centre as all our souls have emanated from Him. Love for God thus translates into love for all beings, great or small. And if such a love exists, one cannot inflict injuries to anyone, as such a love makes everyone a part of you. If we truly love God, we cannot have the impetus to inflict injuries to any of His beings, who are all a part of the divine soul. All living things are inter-related through their common bond with God. Lord Krishna has said in the Bhagavad Gita (18.62) "O son of Bharat, surrender unto Him utterly. By His Grace you will attain transcendental peace and supreme and eternal abode." Only a complete and unconditional surrender to God can bestow eternal peace on us. The moment we submit to God unconditionally, all our ills and sufferings will go. Sense perceptions are delusional and create false egos, which lead to a clash of interest. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has said that if individual souls can have the knowledge that they are interrelated with God, the clash of interests will stop and everyone will live in harmony. Thus Divine Love is the best and only solution for universal peace. This Divine Love (prema bhakti) for God can be cultivated by 'nama-sankirtan', or the chanting of the Holy Name. In the present age, 'nama- sankirtan' is the most effective way to achieve peace as it can be performed under any circumstance. In itself, it is a universal religion under which people of all sects can unite, irrespective

of religion.

God is gracing us in all circumstances

There was a king and the prime minister of the king was a great devotee. Always he used to solace or he used to pacify persons who came to him for solacing due to some trouble in the worldly life. He used to say, "You should not be disturbed, disheartened. You do not know what you did in your past life. You do not know what you will do in the future. So by seeing this present loss you should not be disturbed. There should have been greater loss but by the grace of Sri Krishna it is lessened. It is all for the best! It is all for the best! Don't be disheartened" - like that.

Once the king along with his prime minister and other soldiers went to forest for hunting. Ancient time kshatriyas used to go to jungle for hunting. While moving in the jungle the soldiers were separated from the King and the prime minister. The king and the prime minister were going separately in the jungle when the king saw a beast there. To kill the beast the king shot an arrow but by mistake the arrow went through his thumb finger. The finger was cut and there was profuse bleeding. Out of pain he was expressing his sorrow, "I am to fight always. My one finger is cut. It is a great loss." Then prime minister was trying to pacify him, "You do not know what you did in your past life, you do not know what you will do in the future. There should have been greater loss but by the grace of Sri Krishna it is lessened. So you should not worry." But the king was enraged, "My finger is cut and it is profusely bleeding. When it is a serious loss to me you are saying whatever done by the Supreme Lord is good for me. You can advise me but if suffering comes to you and I advise you what will you think." Prime minister replied, "It is applicable to all. Krishna takes care of everybody. A greater loss had been saved." The king was enraged and mentally thought "I will teach you". He was going with the prime minister in the jungle when he saw a well covered with bushes and grass from a distance. With the prime minister the king went near the well and all of a sudden he pushed the prime minister inside. The king said "Whatever is done by the Lord is for good."

The prime minister said, "Yes without His will you cannot push someone in the well. It is his desire that you push me. Trust me! Trust me! Since he is all good it is for the best."

"Where is your God? I am here and you are here, where is your God? If I leave this place will He rescue you?"

"If Hari protects, nobody can kill him and if Hari wants to kill then nobody can protect him. No power."

"Oh! you haven't given up your dog mentality. You remain here, you die here." When anybody becomes enraged his mind becomes disturbed. The king's mind was disturbed.

In that jungle there were many robbers staying. They worship Goddess Kali for the fulfillment of the robbery. They were successful in their robbery and for that reason they wanted to offer a man to Goddess Kali for her satisfaction. They have brought a pujari and requested him to perform pooja and they went out to bring a man for offering. When they found the king they thought, "Goddess Kali is so gracious. She had sent a person to us. We did not have to go to the village or town. She has sent a man for us." The Dacoits surrounded the king, arrested him and fastened. After fastening him they brought him to the poojari. According to religious rules before offering a beast they should be bathed. So he was taken to a tank to bathe and afterwards they gave some paraphernalia on his forehead. When the poojari attempted to offer the king he saw that the king's finger was seriously injured and blood was oozing out. If an injured person is offered the result will be reversed. Poojari told "If this man is offered the result will be bad because he is injured."

"Oh! This spoils all our efforts and money. Release this person. Get out!"

When the King came to his own capital he thought whatever the prime minister said was correct. "If there was no injury in my finger my life would have been gone, finished. So I have committed great offense to prime minister. Whether he is alive or not! Out of anger I did this." So he ordered his army of soldiers to go immediately and rescue the prime minister. When they went there prime minister was sitting on the grass and performing Hari Nam . By the Lord's grace there was no serious suffering. He was performing Hari Nam . When he was brought to the kingdom the king bowed down and explained what had happened. "I have

committed a great offense."

"No! No! By God's desire you have done. Because of that I got benefited. By pushing me in the well you saved my life. If I would have been with you the dacoits would have sacrificed me instead. We did not know what we did in the past and what we will do in the future. So we cannot see the adjustment."

Whatever is done by the will of the Supreme Lord is for the good of all. *Tat te anukampa sushamiksa manam*. If you can see His grace in every circumstance - in your business, in your happiness then you can get God. If you are disturbed then you cannot. *Tat te anukampa sushamiksa manam*. If you can correctly see then you see in every circumstances God gracing you. We are reaping the fruits of our own actions we should not blame others. We are reaping fruits of our own actions, everybody. As you sow, so shall you reap - like that.

Goodness Without Devotion Is Decoration of Dead Body

All other qualities are present in one who has one-pointed devotion to Supreme Lord Sri Krsna. A person who is averse to Sri Krsna, who has no devotion, has no qualities. He is running after worldly things so how can he have any qualities? From where can he get these qualities? Qualities come from God. If you have one-pointed devotion to Sri Krsna, all the qualities will come to you. We think that we have become civilized in this world. How is this civilized? The so-called civilization of this world is a mere hypocrisy. If one acts in a hypocritical manner, exhibiting grand external behavior, then, in the Kali-yuga, that is considered to be civilized. What is this civilization of Kali-yuga? We have something inside. Our behavior shows one thing but in the heart dwells something else. Outwardly, we shake a person's hand, but inwardly we want to kill that person. You will now find this sort of "civilization" in Kali-yuga. You will get actual civilization only from a suddha bhakta--a Vaisnava--who is one in his words and heart. Those who are "avaisnava" (not Vaisnava) behave

hypocritically, with deceitfulness, displaying mere etiquette. They have no sincerity.

Take, for example, a small boy. He is very beautiful. As he plays here and there, he smears his body with dust and mud. But still, that boy is giving happiness to his parents. If he is decorated with beautiful clothes, then he becomes even more beautiful to them. But if the life leaves that body, and that dead body is decorated with all the most beautiful garments and ornaments, will that dead body give any happiness to the parents or any other person? All will be afraid at the sight of the dead body. When we do not have one-pointed devotion to Sri Krsna, there is no life in our existence. It is like a lifeless, dead body. By decorating your dead body, you cannot get satisfaction for yourself and you cannot give satisfaction to others. You are lifeless.

When you have one-pointed devotion to Sri Krsna, then actual qualities with intrinsic value will appear. Now, without devotion to the Supreme Lord, whatever qualities you may exhibit have no actual intrinsic value. It is an outward show only. It is not coming from within.

Govardhana-Dharan-Lila

Govardhana-Dharan-Lila (The lifting of Govardhana)

The Original Supreme Lord Sri Krishna Himself has revealed the ontological aspects and glories of Sri Govardhana. It has been especially narrated in the most ancient history and civilization of India mentioned in the Rig Veda that Indra, the presiding deity of the clouds, was worshipped on the Earth so that crops could be grown and reanimated by rainfall. We hear from the Srimad-Bhagavatam that according to human tradition and custom, annual worship of Indra was introduced in Vraja-dhama so that there could be cultivation of land and protection of the cows. That was the only means of livelihood for the residents of Vraja-dhama.

Sri Krishna saw that His father Nanda Maharaja and other milkmen had collected many articles for the Indrayag (oblation ceremony for the worship of Indra). Sri Krishna asked His father about the utility of performing such a function. Nanda Maharaja said that if Indra, the presiding deity of the clouds was propitiated, there would be rainfall at the appropriate time. Thereby, paddy crops and grasses would be grown and that would be helpful for their livelihood and for the sustenance of the cows. Nanda Maharaja again said, "If we neglect to perform our hereditary custom and duty, we will never get eternal welfare." After hearing this from His father and other milkmen, in order to infuriate Indra, Sri Krishna made the Vrajavasis (residents of Vraja) understand the futility of the worship of Indra and convinced them of the efficacy of worshipping Govardhana: "Indra is a demigod without any hold over the fruits of actions. He cannot award bad fruit for a good action and good fruit for a bad action. Birth and death, happiness and affliction are due to the actions of the individual souls. Even worldly actions are the cause of enmity, friendship and indifference. Indra cannot undo the fruits of actions. Although cultivation, trade, protection of cows and money-lending are the livelihood of the vaisyas (trader class of society), the Vrajavasis have only accepted protection of the cows as their principal means of livelihood. The residents of Vraja-dhama live in the forests and mountains; therefore, cities, crowded human habitation and houses are not good for them. Therefore, they should start an oblation function for the worship of the cows, brahmanas and mountains. Just as an unchaste lady who leaves her husband cannot get actual welfare by serving another person, similarly, the Vrajavasis cannot get actual welfare by serving others, leaving the service of Giriraja Govardhana Who is their actual shelter." Krishna advised the milkmen of Vraja-dhama to worship Giriraja Govardhana with all the articles collected for the Indrayag. He also advised them to bring milk, yoghurt and other milk products to cook different preparations of food, viz. Payasa (preparation of milk, rice and sugar), Mudgasupa (soup prepared from a kind of pigeon pea or pulse), Pishtaka and Saskuli (sweet preparations made of rice, coconut, sugar and milk). Krishna also directed them in the method of worship of Giriraja Govardhana: "It should be done by the ceremony of giving away cows and offering honorarium to the Vedic brahmanas who will perform the oblation. Brahmanas should be served with good preparations of food. After that, all others, including the Candalas (lowest caste), fallen persons and dogs should be served with appropriate offerings. Cows should be served with fresh grass. After Govardhana-puja, everyone should be adorned with ornaments, good dresses and anointments and should sit down to honour prasada. Lastly, everyone should circumambulate Govardhana mountain with the cows, brahmanas and the Fire-god." Being

enchanted and subdued by his deep parental affection, Nanda Maharaja worshipped Giriraja Govardhana and all the brahmanas properly with all the articles collected for the Indrayag, as per the desire of his beloved son Sri Krishna. After that, while serving the cows with grass and straw, Nanda Maharaja performed parikrama of Govardhana with all the gopas and gopis, with the cows leading in front. All the gopas were adorned with beautiful ornaments and the gopis sitting on the bullock-carts performed Govardhana parikrama while constantly singing the glories of Krishna. To proclaim to the Vrajavasis that Giriraja Govardhana is non-different from Krishna , Sri Krishna repeatedly and loudly uttered the words, "I am the mountain Govardhana," and began to eat all the offerings given to Govardhana by extending thousand of hands. In another Form of Gopala, the son of Nanda Maharaja, Krishna made obeisances to His own manifested Form of Govardhana. Sri Krishna Himself introduced the practice of making prostrated obeisances to Govardhana as well as the circumambulation of Govardhana. Those who disregard Govardhana will be killed by Him in the form of serpents, etc.

Devaraja Indra, the emperor of the demigods, became furious at the Vrajavasis for stopping the Indrayag. Indra oppressed the Vrajavasis by incessant heavy rainfall and a strong hailstorm-like cataclysm. All the Vrajavasis were severely distressed and took shelter of Sri Krishna. Sri Krishna then protected them by lifting Govardhana with His left hand. Later on, Devaraja Indra could understand his mistake and came to Krishna with the Surabhi cow. He worshipped Krishna and prayed to Him to forgive his offence. Giriraja Govardhana is identical with Krishna and He is also the foremost servitor of Krishna.

Srila Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami prays to Giriraja Govardhana as follows:

giri-nripa! haridasa-sreni-varyeti-nama
mritam idam uditam sri-radhika-vaktra-candrat
vraja-nava-tilakatve klpta! vedaih sphutam me
nija-nikata-nivasam dehi govardhana tvam

(Sri Govardhana-vasa-prarthana-dasakam, verse 8)

"O Gririraja Govardhana, when your nectarean name was uttered from the lotus lips of Srimati Radhika in Srimad-Bhagavatam (10.21.18), 'Hantayam adrir abala hari-dasa-varyah,' i.e. 'O simple-hearted innocent gopis, this mountain is foremost amongst all the servitors of Sri Hari,' then you were consecrated by all

the Vedas as the new beautiful tilaka (sandalpaste mark) of Vraja-dhama. I therefore pray to you to bestow me a dwelling place in your vicinity."

The Supreme Lord Sri Krishna stopped the worship of the demigods and introduced the worship of Govardhana, i.e. He introduced the service of Krishna and Krishna-bhaktas. One meaning of Govardhana is to enhance the sense-organs, so Govardhana-puja signifies the enhancement of the transcendental eternal spiritual sense-organs of Krishna and Krishna-bhaktas.

Since heaps of various items of cooked vegetable dishes were offered to Giriraja Govardhana in Govardhana-puja, this festival is also well-known as the Annakuta Festival. Sri Govardhana-dhari Gopala was originally installed by Vajra (the grandson of Krisha and son of Aniruddha). Due to Srila Madhavendra Puripada's extraordinary pure devotion, Govardhana-dhari Gopala reappeared in Govardhana near the bank of Govinda-kunda. Madhavendra Puripada performed the Annakuta Festival in Kali-yuga. This topic is narrated in detail in the Caitanya-Caritamrita (Madhya-lila, chap. 4).

Goverdhan's Appearance and Appellation 'Giriraj'

Sri Goverdhan's appearance in this world — how Goverdhan has got the appellation 'Giriraj' is narrated in 'Gargasamhita', Vrindavan section, chapter 2, written by Sri Gargacharyya. The topic was discussed in the dialogue between Nanda Maharaj and senior advisor Gop Sannanda. Sannanda spoke to Nanda Maharaj giving reference to the conversation between Pandu and Bhisma.

Sri Krishna willing to appear in this world to allay the burden of earth — burden of the grave sins committed by demoniacs, directed Radhika to appear in this world. Radharani expressed her unwillingness to go to a place where there is no presence of Vrindavan, Yamuna and Sri Goverdhan. Sri Krishna sent His own Transcendental Spiritual Realm — Vrajadham — 84

Krosh area (1 Krosh equal to 3 kilometers), i.e., 252 kilometers area to descend in India in this world. Vrajadham is not a part of material world consisting of earth, water, fire, air and sky. Goverdhan has appeared as son of Dron mountain in Shalmoli Island, towards West-India. All demigods were exceedingly delighted at the appearance of Goverdhan and showered flowers.

All big mountains — the Himalayas, the Sumeru etc. were happy to hear about Goverdhan's appearance. They came to pay their homage to Goverdhan and to worship Him. In their prayer they have stated — 'As Goverdhan is the holy place of pastimes of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna in the Transcendental Sweet Goloka Realm, He is the King of all mountains, the crown of Goloka, He is like an umbrella of Para Brahma Sri Krishna and Vrindavan is within His lap.' Since then Goverdhan is renowned as 'Giriraj'.

Pulastya Rishi is one of the seven sons of Brahma, born out of his mind — known as Mдnasa-Putra. Once upon a time, Pulastya Rishi traveling on a pilgrimage came to Shalmoli island and was astonished and charmed to see the extraordinary beauty of Goverdhan mountain, adorned with variety of fruit trees, flower trees, pleasant sitting places, springs, radish, soft grass etc. When Pulastya Muni approached Dronachal, he was worshipped by Dronachal. Pulastya Muni said to Dronachal, "I live in Kashi — special significance — presence of the Ganges and Visweswar Mahadev. Sinners go there to get salvation. But my desire is to perform penance there after installing Goverdhan." Dronachal although extremely worried due to his affection for the child, out of fear of being cursed, directed the child to go to the holy place Bhдrat (India) with the Muni. Initially Goverdhan was in length 64 miles, breadth 40 miles and height 16 miles [Present length of Goverdhan is approximately 7 miles]. Question arose how Muni could carry the big mountain. Pulastya Muni said that he could easily carry the mountain by keeping it on the palm of his hand.
Goverdhan agreed to go with Muni on condition if Muni alights the mountain on the ground anywhere while going, due to heaviness, He will remain there, He will not move. Pulastya Muni accepted the condition and promised that he would carry the mountain to the destination, he would not keep it down on the land anywhere. Muni by keeping the mountain on the right hand palm was moving slowly to the destination. But what happened, when Muni reached Vrajadham, Goverdhan on seeing Yamuna, Vrindavan and remembering sweet pastimes of Krishna, wanted to remain there and became very heavy. Muni was very much distressed and kept the mountain on the land forgetting the condition and promise.

Muni after finishing his daily evacuation, bath and Sandhya-puja (reciting silently in prayers), returned to the place and asked Goverdhan to sit on his hand palm. Goverdhan expressed His reluctance to move. Pulastya Muni tried his best to lift the mountain but was unable to move. He became enraged and cursed Goverdhan that He will have His decay daily measuring one seed of sesame.

The present diminished Goverdhan is now about 7 miles. As long as Goverdhan will exist, the black age (Kaliyuga) will not be able to show it's paramount power, but after thousands of years when Goverdhan and Yamuna will disappear, Kali will be vehemently strong and all living beings will be oppressed and tortured to the extreme, the plight of human beings will be precarious.

Greed for devotion

In Krishna lila we find that, one day, there were no servants in Nanda Maharaja's house. So mother Yasoda went herself to churn butter from the milk. While she was churning the milk, the young child Krishna came to her. At this time Krishna had just learned how to walk and was playing the pastime of being hungry. He said, "O mother, stop churning, I am hungry. Give me milk!" To this Yasoda replied, "There are no servants here, so I am busy. Don't disturb me."

After hearing this, Krishna, with His beautiful small hand, grabbed hold of the churning stick. Yasoda was charmed and put the child on her lap to breastfeed Him, but at that very instant, the milk on the stove started to boil over. So, Yasoda said to Gopala, "Get down, the milk is boiling." But Krishna's appetite had not been appeased and He did not want to get down. He said, "Give me more milk." Yasoda thrust Krishna down and ran to the stove. Krishna became very angry because of this and wanted to break the pot containing the yogurt, but He was at the same time afraid of His mother. So, with a small stone, He silently struck the pot until the pot broke and all the curd spilled onto the floor. Then, seeing other pots hanging from the ceiling, He climbed onto the mortar and

broke all the pots.

Sometimes the other gopis complained to Yasoda and Nanda Maharaja. They complained that Krishna was very naughty, and would come to their houses at night. They said, "We light lamps to keep the thieves away, but your boy blows them out. Then He steals our butter." Then Nanda would ask Krishna, "Kanhaiya, did you do this?" "No father. I did not. They are telling lies." Krishna would put on a very innocent face, like a sadhu or a saint. When His parents saw this innocent expression, they thought it impossible that Krishna could have done such a thing. Nanda Maharaja would answer the gopis' charges, "I have thousands of cows. I am the king of Vraja. Why should my son go to another house to steal butter?" The reason was that sometimes Krishna wants to go to other people's houses to give them a chance to serve Him. Normally His parents would not allow Him to go anywhere else to eat. They love Krishna too much themselves. That is why He sometimes acts like a thief, to give all His devotees a chance to serve Him, to fulfill their desires. So, outwardly, it seems as though Krishna was destroying everything and spoiling the yogurt by eating it and feeding it to the monkeys. But the fact is that the yogurt was prepared from the milk of cows who desired that their milk be used in Krishna's service. So actually Krishna was giving all a chance to serve Him in this way.

When Yasoda returned from the stove she saw what mischief Krishna had wrought. He had destroyed all the pots and was feeding the monkeys. As a result, she wanted to punish Him. She thought, "If I do not correct Him, His character will be spoiled." So, Yasoda decided to cane the Supreme Lord Bhagavan to correct His character. She approached Krishna silently, hoping to catch Him by surprise. But just when she was about to catch Him, Krishna jumped up and ran away. Soon Yasoda was chasing Krishna all over the courtyard, but she quickly became tired and started to move more slowly. Although nobody is able to catch Krishna, He Himself slowed down and allowed her to catch Him because of her pure affection for Him.

Yasoda said, "What have you done? I shall cane you!" Krishna was afraid of the cane in His mother's hand and started to cry. Even the god of death fears Krishna, the Supreme Lord, but Krishna is afraid when He sees a cane in the hand of His mother. How is this possible? This is Vraja prema. The Vrajavasis do not see Krishna as God. They only love Him from their hearts.

Then, Yasoda felt pity for Krishna and decided instead to fasten Him with some

rope, so He could do no more mischief. She tried to tie the rope around His belly, but the rope was short by two fingers. Again and again she brought more rope, but it was always two fingers short. So, although we see, on the one hand, that Krishna was limited like a small boy, in fact He is unlimited even in His apparent limitation.

Why was the rope always two fingers short? What is the significance of this? One finger represents the grace of Krishna, the other, the sincere service with which we can attract His grace. Yasoda never stops in her service of Krishna, and that is why in the end Krishna allowed her to bind Him with the ropes of her love. We must also make the same kind of sincere effort to serve Guru and Vaisnava; then we will be able to attract their grace.

Srila Rupa Gosvami has written this song:

bandhu sange jadi taba ranga pariahs thake abhilas
tabe mor katha rakha jeyo naka jeyo naka
vrndavane kesitirtha ghater sakas
nayane bankina-drsti mukhe manda-has

"If you still desire to amuse yourself with your friends, you should not go to Vrndavana. And if you go to Vrndavana, you should especially not go to Kesi Ghat. There is a danger lurking there. What is that danger? It is Sri Hari, Krishna Himself, who has taken the form of Govinda, Govinda vigraha dhari. The danger is that if you go there and see Him, if you have a vision of Govinda, you will not be able to return to the customary amusements of your ordinary household life.

The look of His eyes, His crooked glance, is very dangerous-- *nayane bankima-drsti mukhe manda-has*. He is not standing straight, but tri-bhanga, with three curves. If this Krishna enters you, He will not come out. If Narayana enters, He may come out. Narayana is straight. But Krishna is curved like a hook and that is dangerous.

His color is like the color of a rain cloud-- *varna samujjvala syama*. You will find that in the springtime the leaves of the trees are so fresh. Similarly, Krishna is not old, but rather, a young adolescent. The lips of His mouth are very dangerous and if you see the peacock feather on His head, you will not be able to come back to your household life. So, if you want to have fun with your friends, you should not go to Vrndavana, and should not see Krishna.

Unfortunately, we go to Vrndavana and still come back. We do not have such devotion. If anybody truly had the greed for Govinda, he could not return to his mundane life. His worldly relations would be destroyed. Greed for devotion is developed by associating with the pure devotees of the Lord. By their grace it becomes possible for us to attain Krishna prema, divine love for God, the ultimate goal of life.

Guru-Tattva

(Ontologically Who is Spiritual Guide)

TATTVA=

‘Tat’ = Transcendental Reality which cannot be comprehended by material senses - gross or subtle.

‘Tattva’ = Inner Significance of Transcendental Reality.

Introduction

Etymological significance of the word ‘Guru’ has been elaborately described in different Indian scriptures. It will not be wise to make the subject terse and beyond the point by going through theoretical scholarly discussion frustrating the real purpose of getting spiritual amelioration - practical realisation of the Highest Bliss . Fundamental points relevant for devotional practice for getting the Highest objective -Transcendental Divine Knowledge discending through preceptorial or disciplic channel as taught by realised souls - bona fide Gurus - Pure devotees with evidences from authentic scriptures will be delineated.

Hari-Bhajan in Married Life

To spread the message of pure love as taught and practiced by Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, and to give mercy to enslaved jivas (living beings) like us, the present acarya of our math, His Divine Grace Sri Srimad Bhakti Ballabha Tirtha Goswami Maharaja, reached Bhatinda along with several other saints despite the precarious condition in Punjab. (Punjab was suffering from terrorism during those days). On the last day of the festival, while addressing the gathering at night, Srila Guru Maharaja began by saying that one gentleman had visited him recently. He had asked, "What is the duty of grhasthas like us? How should we perform hari-bhajan?" Srila Guru Maharaja went on to say that many married persons ask him questions about this subject. They say that they like to do bhajan and go to spiritual festivals but don't get time from their worldly responsibilities. They also say that sadhus don't have anything to do other than hari-bhajan but grhasthas have so many responsibilities to fulfill. What should they do in such a state?

Addressing such grhasthas, Srila Guru Maharaja said, "Let's assume you have many things to do and are always engaged in some or the other work. Don't you take some time off to eat while engaged in work? You eat in the morning, you take lunch, and then you take dinner. Some people even eat in the evening. We have so many things to do and yet we find time to eat 3 or 4 times a day. Why? Because we have understood the importance of eating. We know that if we don't eat, our bodies will become weak. However, we have not understood the importance of hari-bhajan. That is why we are not able to find time for it."

Srila Guru Maharaja went on to say that necessity is the mother of invention. When we understand the importance of hari-bhajan, we will also find some time for it. At our maths in Calcutta and other cities, sat-sanga (scriptural discourse) is a daily activity. Some people come daily for sat-sanga but if they are unable to come for some reason like rain, etc. they always hanker for sat-sanga and look forward to when they will be able to go to the math and hear the hari-katha. Why does this happen? Because their soul has been awakened. When their soul does

not get its food, they feel pain and emptiness. Therefore they somehow try to manage and get more and more time for sat-sanga.

One can easily find some time for bhajan, even in the midst of innumerable responsibilities. To further explain this point, Srila Guru Maharaja gave the example of Ambarisa Maharaja from Srimad-Bhagavatam. How many responsibilities might we have? At the most 2 or 3 big shops, a big piece of land, or a farm? However, Srila Sukadeva Goswami related to Pariksit Maharaja the story of Maharaja Ambarisa who was the emperor of the whole world. Now you can imagine how many responsibilities he might have had. Yet, he performed bhajan in such a manner that the curse of Durvasa Rsi, which never goes in vain, was not even able to touch him.

nabhagad ambariso 'bhun
maha-bhagavatah krti
nasprsad brahma-sapo 'pi
yam na pratihatah kvacit

"From Nabhaga, Maharaja Ambarisa took birth. Maharaja Ambarisa was an exalted devotee, celebrated for his great merits. Although he was cursed by an infallible brahmana, the curse could not touch him." (S.B. 9.4.13)
Maharaja Pariksit was surprised to hear this and he become interested in hearing more about the character of such an amazing devotee of the lord. Sukadeva Goswami continued:

sri-suka uvaca
ambariso maha-bhagah
sapta-dvipavatim mahim
avyayam ca sriyam labdhva
vibhavam catulam bhuvi
mene 'tidurlabham pumsam
sarvam tat svapna-samstutam
vidvan vibhava-nirvanam
tamo visati yat puman
(S.B. 9.14.15-16)

One who possesses wealth is considered to be fortunate. In this respect, Ambarisa Maharaja was very, very fortunate. He had inexhaustible, unlimited opulence and prosperity. Ordinary people cannot even conceive of his wealth. In

spite of being such a great emperor, he considered all of his wealth to be very insignificant and temporary like a dream.

On the footpaths of Calcutta, we can see many beggars that are born and die there while begging. Think of a beggar who is hungry and sleeping on an old and dirty sheet. He is dreaming that he has become a big minister or a king. Everybody is honoring him. There are beautiful arrangements of various kinds of foodstuff and drinks for his satisfaction. There are arrangements of air-conditioned rooms for his residence. Whenever he wants to travel, he goes by airplane and various other luxurious vehicles. While seeing such a beautiful dream, he wakes up and sees that he is still sleeping on the footpath over a torn sheet. So his dream of being a king seems completely false. In the same way, although Maharaja Ambarisa possessed immense wealth, he considered it all to be false and temporary. He did not have even a tinge of attachment for his possessions. He knew very well that his wealth could be destroyed while he was alive or he would have to leave it behind. Separation was inevitable. He also knew that attachment to temporary material wealth causes one to fall down into ignorance, hellish conditions or miseries. This is the secret. To live in the world while not belonging to it. Sadhus also live in this world but they never want to enjoy it. Sadhus consider themselves, this world, and all the belongings of this world to be the objects of enjoyment for the Supreme Lord. That is the reason why they never get entangled in this material world. It is known as sudarsan. In the Bhagavad-Gita (9.24), the Supreme Lord Sri Krsna says:

aham hi sarva yajnanambhokta ca prabhur eva ca

"I am the enjoyer of all kind of sacrifices. I am the doer. Nobody else is the enjoyer or doer." When we come under the maya potency of the Supreme Lord, we consider ourselves to be the doer or enjoyer. Maharaja Ambarisa, in spite of being the sole emperor of the world, never got the false pride of being the owner of the earth. For example, when we go on pilgrimage, we pay 4000 rupees to the railway company to book a passenger bogie. For one month, we travel in that bogie to all the holy places. During our pilgrimage we pay full attention to the cleanliness, electricity, and water supply in the bogie. If anything goes wrong, we go to the station office and get it fixed. After one month, we reach Bhatinda (Punjab) and get down from the train so fast it's like there is a race going on.

After leaving the bogie we never look back at it. We spent so many days in it. We took care of its cleanliness, electricity, water, etc. and spent 4000 rupees on

it. However, we have not even a slight attachment for that bogie. What is the reason for this?

The reason is knowledge.

The knowledge that this bogie is not ours. It belongs to the railway company. It was only meant for our pilgrimage. If we get a similar kind of realization about this material world, we will think that all our possessions, wife, son, family, house and our very body belong to the Supreme Lord. Always think that we have got it for a fixed period of time as per the will of the Supreme Lord, and after finishing that period, it will go away by the will of the Supreme Lord. Then we will not keep attachment for this temporary world which is full of miseries. Sometimes, travelers come to a dharmasala (lodge), stay for some time, and then go on to their destinations. Similarly, we should not have attachment for this world while living in this world. However, these are all not just talking matters– we should realize them.

Just think!

Maharaja Ambarisa did not have even the least bit of attachment for such a great kingdom and immense wealth. And here we are not able to leave our attachment for a house or a cottage. If we lose a ten dollar bill we will think about it continuously. What is the reason? How had Maharaja Ambarisa got such a consciousness? In reply, Srimad-Bhagavatam says:

vasudeve bhagavati
tad-bhaktesu ca sadhusu
prapto bhavam param visvam
yenedam lostravat smrtam
(S.B. 9.4.17)

Maharaja Ambarisa had bhava (strong attachment with feelings: the first stage of development of love of God) in the eternal blissful form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vasudeva, and in the saintly persons who are the Lord's devotees. That is why the whole universe and all its wealth were valueless for him. Therefore, unless we get a higher taste, we will not be able to forgo our attachments to this world. For example, if you put a little sugar or a rasagulla in the mouth of a child who has eaten dirt, he will spit out all the dirt from his mouth–something he would not do even after getting scolded for it. He will then

become greedy to eat the rasagulla. Similarly, by being attached to the Supreme Lord and His devotees, all our attachments to this world will come to an end. With attachment to the Supreme Lord, all our greed, ignorance, miseries, and fear of hell will end and we will get the highest taste for the Supreme Lord.

Gaur Premanande! Hari Hari Bol!

(Translated from the Viswa Shanti Sutra Pravachan Mala booklet, published by Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, Chandigarh)

His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj ji says,

Submission to the Will of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the only way to get peace. We should not have any separate desire.

We should pray for unadulterated one-pointed devotion unto Supreme Lord and nothing else.

Holiest Month – Purushottama

by H.D.G. Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj

This is a summary of discourse on significance of Purushottama-month, by HIs Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj, President-Acharya of Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Math.

vande navaghana-syam dvibhujam murlidharam
pitambardharam devam saradham purusottamam

"I offer my obeisances to Navaganasyam (Krsna, who has the color of a fresh rain cloud), who is holding the flute with His two hands. I worship Purusottama who is so beautiful in His yellow dress (pitambhara)." "I pray for the causeless mercy of my Gurudeva, His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Dayita Madhava Gosvami, to give me strength, to sing the glories of the Supreme Lord Sri Krsna and His personal associates, to purify my mind and to get exclusive one-pointed devotion to the Supreme Lord Sri Krsna. I pay my innumerable prostrated obeisances to my most revered siksa gurus and I pay my due respects to all who are present here.

By the will of the Supreme Lord we have come back to India during this month of Purusottama, which is actually the holiest month.

According to our almanac every three years, one month is added. This is done to harmonize the lunar month (Chandra-maas) with the solar month (Soar Maas). The inserted month is known as 'Purusottama', and is technically called an 'intercalary month'. According to some smarta Brahmins, this month is unholy. They call it 'tarnished'.

Prescribing various holy functions for all months of the year, they left out this additional month taking it to be unholy ('tarnished') for no holy activity can be performed therein.

Yet Vaishnava devotees object to this, arguing that not a single moment is to be spent without the worship of the Supreme Lord. If you spent it to the contrary, your life will be spoiled. If we shall not do any holy work in this month, then if we will die in this month we shall go to hell? This is not the purpose. But these karma-kandis, who prescribed these rituals and regulations were inclined to observe them merely for achieving material benefits in this world and being

uplifted after death to heaven. Taking this to be the aim and not being able to understand the purpose behind it, they encourage the observance of rules and rituals. So, they neglected this month.

As everything has got consciousness in the background -- the example is given of the sun, which is presided over by the Sun god, the moon which is presided over by the Moon god and Srimati Ganga Devi, who is the presiding Deity of the river Ganges -- so similarly this month has a presiding deity.

Being depressed due to her seemingly useless existence, the personified deity of this month approached Lord Narayana. This incident is described in the scriptures. She went to Narayana, asking, 'What offense did I commit? No one is performing any pious activities during my time. Why?' Lord Narayana directed her towards Lord Krsna: 'You come with Me, I shall take you to Lord Krsna.' Upon being approached by her, Lord Krsna responded: 'I am Purusottama and I can not be comprehended by finite beings of this world. They can not comprehend Me by their mental comprehension and sense organs as I am beyond these means.' Those Brahmins also are under the control of the illusory energy. They give some prescriptions for getting mundane benefits without understanding that these various prescriptions simply have been given to facilitate different classes of persons to finally submit to the Supreme Lord. Yet the purpose is not the achievement of material benefits, but it is to recover from the disease of birth and death and to finally develop loving devotion to the Supreme Lord, and thus experience supreme bliss. They do not understand this.

Krsna explained: 'This additional month is like Me. I can not be comprehended by the conditioned souls of this world and I am supremely superior to Brahman and Paramatma so I am designated as "Purushottama." You are identical with Me. You are the holiest month. If anybody observes vrata (vow of austerity) during your time, he can get everything. If as by scriptural injunctions he observes it, it is even more auspicious than Kartik-vrata, the holiest month. So you will be known by the name "Purusottama".'

Vaisnavas do observe this Purusottama-vrata.

This year Purushottama month is being observed from 18th Sep. to 16th October.

(Things to do:) We shall read the glories of Purushottama-Vrata, from the writings of Sri Bhakti Vinode Thakur, in the morning; daily recite 'Sri Jagannathastakam' and 'Chauragraganya Purusashtakamas' in the afternoon and perform Japam instructed by Kaundinya Muni:- Goverdhana-Dharam Vande Gopalam Goparupinam, Gokulotsavameeshaanam Govindam Gopikapriyam.

Then in the evening - Deep-dan (to offer a lamp of pure ghee) before Vishnu-Mandir (a temple of Lord Vishnu, Krishna or Rama), Lastly, at night to read 'Brahmastava' 40 slokas, from Srimad Bhagwattam, Chapter 14th, Canto 10th.

But as by the eligibility of those who perform it Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has given three categories, known as: 'Svanistha' 'Parinistitha' and 'Nirapeksa.' Svanistha: Svanistha refers to those persons who have inclinations with Varnasrama-dharma and are still striving for material temporary benefits.

Being covered by the illusory potency -- sattva, raja and tama guna they nevertheless follow some rituals. Prescriptions on how to perform this vrata are given by Valmiki Muni. Yet, hearing them may make you faint. They are very strict, like lying down only on a bed of nails rather than on a normal bed.

Parinistitha:
Another section, superior in quality yet less in number is called Parinistitha. Parinistitha refers to those who are not striving for any material benefits and are correctly following the prescriptions as given by the respective acaryas of one of the four Vaisnava schools on how to observe this Purusottama-vrata (in a similar way as Kartika-vrata).

Nirapeksa:
The highest form of observance is called Nirapeksa. Nirapeksa refers to those possessing one-pointed devotion to Sri Krsna. They concentrate on worshipping the Supreme Lord by hearing, chanting and remembering the name, form, pastimes and qualities of Sri Krsna day and night for spiritual benefit only. Reasoning correctly that any tendency for material benefit will certainly divert their minds, they observe this vrata by hearing about Krsna, chanting the Maha Mantra and taking prasadam. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura recommends we follow this path."

Submitted by

Rashbeharidas,
Secretary, GOKUL (India)

Holy Purushottama month

The Vedic Aryan Scriptures are divided into two categories- '*Smarta*' and '*Paramartha*'. Those who are entitled for observing '*Smarta*' rules and regulations where allurements are given for getting non-eternal benefits i.e. '*Karmakanda*'- Varnasrama Dharma (skama - actuated by desires) observe them in accordance with their scriptural instructions. At first they cannot have aptitude to follow the instructions of 'Paramartha' (Niskama- desireless). Those who have got desire for only one-pointed causeless devotion to Sree Krishna for absolute bliss are entitled for 'Paramartha'.

'Smarta' group considering twelve months as one year, make all rules and regulations for observing holy functions in the year. But after 32 months one intercalary month (Adhikmas) is inserted to harmonize calendar with solar year. No holy deeds are prescribed for that intercalary month by Smarta group. They consider intercalary month unholy (Malinmas).

As per evidence of Sreemat Bhagavat - the quintessence of all scriptures, Supreme Lord Sree Krishna, after creating human species is very much satisfied thinking they have got discriminating power between good and bad, eternal and non-eternal. They can accept the Eternal Truth Sree Krishna, can worship Him and can get the highest bliss. So human beings should not spoil the intercalary month without worshipping Supreme Lord.

Scriptural evidence- 'Vrihad Naradiya Purana' stated that Supreme Lord Sree Krishna declared intercalary month as the holiest. As He is Purushottam, this intercalary month is also designated as Purushottam. It will be foolishness to the extreme if human beings spoil their valuable time, without worshipping Sree

Krishna in this holiest month. On 14 June 2007.

Household life or Ascetic life

My dear ***
This Brahmanda of fourteen worlds is the prison House of all enslaved Jivas who are averse to the service of Supreme Lord Sree Krishna. Jivas in their real selves are the eternal servants of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. It is an offence for them to become averse to Sree Krishna. Mahamaya (illusory energy of Sree Krishna) has built this Mayik Brahmanda for the punishment of the offenders who are reluctant to serve Sree Krishna. The culprits cannot hope to get peace in this Prison-House-Brahmanda. The root cause of our afflictions is forgetfulness of our relation with Sree Krishna. So to eradicate the root of the sufferings- three fold afflictions, we should submit to Sree Krishna completely and unconditionally.
We are to practise six-fold Saranagati-
(1) We are to accept all that is congenial for pure devotion.
(2) Give up all that is not congenial.
(3) Should have firm faith that Sree Krishna will protect us under all Circumstances from outside foes and inside foes (passions).
(4) He is the only Sustainer and Maintainer of our real and apparent selves.
(5) We all belong to Him, i.e. we are of Him (Atmanibedan).
(6) We should give up all material egos and think that we are spiritual sparks- minutest parts of the marginal potency (Tatastha Shakti) of Supreme Lord Sree Krishna, i.e. we should not have mundane vanities. We should be humbler than the blade of grass.
Saranagati is the best medicine for cure of all afflictions and for solution of all problem.
We reap the fruits of our own good and bad deeds. We should not blame others for the afflictions we get due to our own Karma. Others may be instrumental, but they are not the cause. The result of Karma (Prarabdha karma) which has started should be suffered or enjoyed-whether he is an ascetic or householder. Only Suddha bhakti or Suddha Nam can destroy the fruits of even Prarabdha karma.

There are two paths-“Prabritimarg”- (Path through married life. [Swabarnabibaha] and “Nibritimarg” (Path through unmarried life-ascetic life). General people are eligible for "Prabritimarg". Persons who have made up their minds that they will never go to household life (worldly life) are only competent to take the ascetic order.
You should not wait for your decision that in future whether you will accept married life or unmarried life, you should start Bhajan immediately (Chanting of the Holy Name, etc. avoiding tenfold offences) because nobody knows when we shall have to leave this world. When Srimad Raghunath Das Goswami was very eager to surmount this worldly ocean, Lord Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu pacified him at first saying he should not become mad for it; at present he should remain in his house with a restful mind. Nobody can surmount the ocean of births and deaths all of a sudden. It will take time and gradually one can surmount it. One should not try to show outwardly indifference to worldly affairs. Instead, inwardly one should practice abnegation and worship Sree Krishna with sincerity. Sree Krishna will rescue him from the pangs of worldly suffering in no time.
My love to you all.

Affectionately yours,
Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

How can we call Supreme Lord to get His response?

In a town in Bengal, there was a man who worked in an office. He lived with his wife and two children. One of the children was only three or four months old and the other was seven years old. One day, the man told his wife, "You will have to prepare breakfast early today because I have to go into the office early. After I eat, I shall leave right away."
When the wife went to cook, she first put the baby on the bed and then went into the kitchen. But, whenever she would enter the kitchen, the child would cry. She

thought, "With the child in my lap, how will I be able to cook? It is very difficult." She was thinking what she should do. Then she thought of a way she could manage. She called the seven-year-old child.
"Darling, come here!" she called. "Do you know that red toy in the shop?" "Yes, I know it," the child answered. "Go and buy that toy, but be sure that it makes a nice jingling sound."
The child took some money and went off to buy the toy. He brought it home and gave it to the mother.

The mother laid the baby down on the bed and hung the red-coloured toy with the jingling sound above him, at the end of a rope. The baby saw the toy and immediately started to play with it, hitting it from side to side. The child was most delighted as he continued to slap the toy and hear the jingling sound. For one hour he played like that, and the mother went to do her cooking. After that, the child started to feel hungry. For the entire time that the child was playing, he did not remember his mother. But, now that he felt hungry, he thought, "Oh, where is my mother?" But his mother did not come. Then, he started crying, signifying, "I am hungry! Come!" He could not speak, so he beckoned his mother by crying. "Come to me and suckle me! I am hungry!" His mother, however, was busy cooking. "No," she thought, "let the child cry."
After some time, the child stopped crying and went back to playing with the toy - jingle, jingle, jingle. After playing like that for a while, the pangs of hunger returned. His hunger increased and increased and he became more and more unhappy. He began to cry for his mother even more loudly than before.
His mother heard the crying of the baby, but thought that she should first finish her cooking. Finally, the hunger became unbearable for the child. The child thought, "I don’t want toys!" All he could think about was his mother.
His crying became louder and louder until he was screaming. He started to throw his arms about and kick his legs, in a tantrum. Then the mother thought, "Oh, I cannot stay away any longer!" The mother ran toward the child, embraced him and suckled him.
Similarly, the Supreme Lord has given us toys - the toy of a wife or husband, toys of children, toys of buildings, toys of radios, toys of videos, toys of computers. Seeing this, Krsna thinks, "They are absorbed in their toys! I have no worries. I am engaged in My pastimes in the transcendental realm. They do not want this. They want those things instead. Here, take this computer! Take that video! Take this! Take that!"

Upon the awakening of his real self (atma), a man feels the want of the sweetest affection of the Supreme Lord. He cries, "Oh Supreme Lord! In this world, nothing gives me happiness. Everything is temporary. Everyone is selfish. You are my most beloved! Where are You? I have forgotten You! Come! Come! I am in a furnace! Come! Come!" Weeping, he calls, but Krsna does not come. "I am engaged in My pastimes," Krsna
says. For some time, the man then becomes absorbed in the affairs of his family and relatives, and forgets Krsna. Time passes and he cries again, "Where is My beloved Supreme Lord? Where is He?" Crying, crying. But, the Supreme Lord still does not come.
Ultimately, he shouts, "I do not want a house! I do not want anything! Nobody is mine - You are mine! Oh beloved Supreme Lord! Come! Come! Come!" He cries and weeps, tossing his arms and legs about. Then Krsna cries, "Oh!" and comes to him. This sort of perturbation of the heart, extreme eagerness for getting Bhagavan, must be there.
When we associate with the suddha bhakta who is crying for Krsna, then the eternal nature of atma will be awakened. You have love for God. Love is there in your soul. It exists, but it is presently enveloped by the external potency of the Supreme Lord and you have become averse to Sri Krsna. Passing through different species, our minds have become enveloped by so many evil desires.

How can we remain peaceful in family problems and that our devotion does not get disturbed by them? (From the letters of Srila Gurudeva)

My Dear *** Das,
I am now awfully busy in my hectic preaching-tour in North-India. I am accompanied by a big party of ascetics and devotees. We are going to Jammu on the 8th January as per scheduled programme in spite of the area being disturbed. We shall next visit New Delhi, Rajasthan, Maharashtra (Mumbai) and will return to Calcutta on 26th January before Calcutta Math Annual Function.

I am extremely worried and perturbed to hear about you from *** Das who had a talk with *** Das. What I have heard from *** Das is unbelievable and beyond my thinking. I have seen your family relation completely non-different from Indian family-relation, unlike western countries. I was very much impressed to see your family love-relation. We should always remember that we belong to Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's school of thought. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu teaches us to love all human beings, nay even other living beings, seeing their eternal relation with our most beloved object of worship - Supreme Lord Sree Krishna. If we, as followers of the teachings of Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, cannot love our own persons, how can we love others? Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu teaches us to chant Holy Name with the four qualities of being humbler than a blade of grass, more forbearing than a tree, giving respect to all and having no desire to get respect from others. The devotees here have got great respect for your family and polite behavior. This dignity should be retained at all costs. Both of you should think about your daughter, Sreemati ***. Worldly interests should not be allowed to harm eternal spiritual interests. You yourself used to say to others that this precious human birth was only meant for service of Sree Krishna and not for eating, sleeping, defending and mating. Sometimes in family love-relations, there may be temporary expression of offended state of mind but it is not lasting. Our Most Revered Gurudeva used to advise us to remember the instructions of Prahlad Maharaj, "Yat vadashi yat karoshi, chanumodeta nirmamam", i.e., if anybody in the family says something or does something against one's liking, sometimes it is necessary for approval to that without attachment. In that case, we will not be responsible for approval. For a peaceful family life, this sort of behavior is necessary. How Prahlad Maharaj could stay in the most hostile atmosphere with calm and serene mentality, it should be thought deeply. He never became unbalanced or lost his calmness of mind. We should try to adjust ourselves with the environment, we cannot make the environment adjusted to us. Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and our Guruvarga repeatedly advise us to go through the holy biographies of Prahlad Maharaj and Ambarish Maharaj. I think what I have heard is only a temporary expression of emotion. I am anxiously waiting to hear from you in regard to this at the earliest.

Kindly please remember the four Narasimha Mantras everyday.

*** met me at Agartala, India while we were observing month-long Kartik Vrata. He reminded me about my prachar program in Europe in the month of May-June. I could not tell him definitely, but the program cannot be before middle of May.

May All-Merciful Sree Guru Gauranga bless you. My love to you all.

Affectionately yours,
Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

How Lord Jagannath Came to Chakdaha

Jagadish Pandit appeared near this place. His parents were very devotional. After the death of his parents, Jagadish Pandit and Hiranya Pandit went to live in Navadwip dham, where they constructed a hut for living.

According to Srila Kavikarna Purna Goswami, Jagadish Pandit and Hiranya Pandit in Gaura Lila are the wives of the brahmins in Krishna lila. Jagadish Pandit is a personal associate of the Supreme Lord; he is not a ordinary person.

When Krishna went to the forest with His sakha friends, He told them they would not go far that day, so no food was required to take with them. They planned to go to Batrol. Sakhas think of Krishna as their sakha, not as God. So they know that whatever they desire, Krishna will grant them. The sakhas became hungry and asked Krishna for food. Krishna became worried; He was thinking what to do. Krishna remembered that nearby some brahmins were performing a yajna, and plenty of food was being offered. So Krishna told his cowherd friends to go there and tell their names, and that the brahmins upon hearing Krishna and Balarama were hungry, would supply them with food. The sakhas went to the yajna and saw a big sacrificial area with many brahmins performing a big yajna with much food being offered. Upon seeing that scene, the sakhas were afraid to approach the brahmins, but when they heard the brahmins chanting: krsnaya svaha, baladevaya svaha, govindaya svaha..., the sakhas lost their fear and approached the brahmins and said, "Krishna and Balarama are hungry, please give us food for them." But the brahmins objected to that, because they are karma khandis.

The sakhas came back and told Krishna what had happened. They said, "Krishna please give us food." So Krishna asked them, "Was there no food?" The sakhas said, "Yes, there was plenty of it." Then Krishna said to them, "Go to the wives of the brahmins. They have love for me. They will give you food to eat." The cowherd boys arrived at the house and called inside, "Anybody home?" One of the wives came forward and asked, "What do you want?" The sakhas replied, "Krishna and Balarama are hungry." The wife asked, "Where are they? We have not had darshan of Them for so long." The sakhas said, "Please give us some food. We will bring it to Krishna and Balarama." The wives thought, "If we start to cook now, maybe Krishna and Balarama will already have left." So they took the food which was already prepared and went out of the house to meet Krishna and Balarama.

In Dvapara yuga, wives did not go out of house. Nowadays there is no restriction but 50-60 years ago, this rule was observed. When the husbands saw their wives going out, they asked, "Where are you going? The wives replied, "We have heard from you that Krishna and Baladev are the Supreme Lords, so they have sent the cowherd boys for food to eat and we want to take the opportunity to serve Them." The brahmins said, "Without our permission you cannot go anywhere. If you decide to go, then don't come back home again." The wives decided to meet with Krishna anyway, so much was their devotion for Krishna, ahaituki bhakti. But one wife was stopped forcefully by her husband and locked at home. She could not tolerate not meeting with Krishna, and she cried and cried until she left her body, and her soul went to meet with Krishna. The wifes came with all the food, and they were very pleased to see Krishna and Balarama. Actually the food had no value for Krishna and Balaram, but their devotion was most valuable. After eating, Krishna told them to return home.

"What are you saying?" the Gopis objected. "We came here only with a one way ticket." Krishna replied, "Do not worry. In love, there are two aspects, union and separation. After a period of separation, the union gets sweeter. Do not worry about your husbands. They will accept you." The wives of the brahmins had served Krishna, and by the fruit of their service, the brahmins also received mercy. The brahmins regretted their mistake and started criticizing themselves. "What is the use of our yajnas if we ignore the desire of Krishna and Balaram?" When the wives returned home, the brahmins paid their dandavat pranams to them.

So how did the wives get such devotion for Krishna? In their house they had a garden were every day a devotee came and sang the glories of Krishna and

Balaram. By hearing these descriptions they acquired devotion. Those wives appeared as Jagadish Pandit and Hiranya Pandit in Caitanya lila.

One ekadasi, Nimai Pandit was crying and as usual His parents tried to pacify Him by chanting haribol, haribol. But this time Nimai Pandit did not stop crying. Then Nimai Pandit said, "Today is Ekadasi, and Jagadish Pandit offered Bhoga to Vishnu. I want to eat that." Amazed how the small boy knew that it was Ekadasi and that this devotee was offering Bhoga to Vishnu, immediately Jagannath Mishra went to meet Jagadish Pandit.
Jagadish Pandit said, "Nimai Pandit is Gopal Himself, so take that prasadam and give it to Him." By devotion we can subdue the Supreme Lord, according to Rupa Goswami.
Dhruva was only 5 years old, but by his sincerity he achieved his goal. Jivas reap the fruits of their own actions. Dhruva's mother said that he should not maintain any hostile feelings towards his step-mother, otherwise he would not attain God. If we want to be succesfull, we should not maintain any hostile feelings towards anyone in this world, not even our enemies.

So Mahaprabhu instructed Jagadish Pandit to go to Puri. When Jagadish Pandit came and saw Lord Jagannath, he started to cry. Jagannath asked, "Why do you cry? Take me with you." Then Jagannath instructed the king in a dream to give Jagannath, who was already in Samadhi, to Jagadish Pandit. So Jagannath made Himself light so that Jagadish Pandit could carry Him, and here in Chakdaha, Jagannath suddenly became heavy. This is how Jagannath came to this place.

Even today some descendants of Jagadish Pandit reside here. They approached our Gurudev, Srila B.D. Madhava Goswami Maharaja to take care of Jagannath.

Speech continued by Srila Bhakti Vijnan Bharati Maharaja Nama, rupa, guna, lila cannot be comprehended by the material senses. Krishna may appear on our tongue as the holy name if He desires. The Supreme Lord is hungry for the love of His devotees. Seeing His devotees, the Lord becomes hungry.

Here in Chakdaha, the wheel of the chariot of Bhagirati Muni got stuck. So it was here that the family of Jagadish Pandit requested our Gurudev to take over the service of Lord Jagannath. Srila Bhakti Dayita Madhava Maharaja consulted about this matter with Srila B.R. Sridhar Maharaja who also advised him to take the service of Jagannath. So our Gurudev saw it as the desire of Jagannath. Our Gurudev converted the mandir into a math. It was established in a math is a place were students study for spiritual upliftment. Our scriptures say that maths

are necessary. In a mandir one may get sukriti, but in a math you can develop hari-bhakti. Maths are established for souls to get association with sadhus. In a math the Bhagavatam should be discussed daily. The Bhagavatam says that by daily reciting this Bhagavatam with faith, devotion to Krishna will be attained very quickly. If in a math, sravanam and kirtanam are not going on, then the activities performed there are only karma. If we are lazy for sravanam and kirtanam, then we are actually not residing in a math. Devotion is very rare. In this human form of life we must strive for our only requirement, the Supreme Lord. If that is wasted, we are considered to have committed suicide. Those preaching about karma, jnana and yoga are committing violence to the souls.

How one can get a "Sad Guru"?

Tulasi Dasa says "binu hari krpa milahin nahin santa." And the other side of this is, "bina santa krpa milahin nahin hari." In other words, by the grace of the Supreme Lord, one gets a sadhu and by the grace of the sadhu, one gets the Supreme Lord.

Both are interrelated. You see, mother of Dhruva told him to chant the Name of the Supreme Lord with faith, even though she was not a saint. Yes, she was a patha-pradarsaka guru, not a tattvika guru or srotriya brahmanistha guru. What was the result of that? Dhruva started calling out for the Lord with faith and as a result, he met a sadhu. He met Narada Goswami. Then Narada Goswami gave him a mantra and taught him the process of bhajan. Shortly after that, Dhruva attained the Supreme Lord.
So the conclusion is that one first gets a suddha bhakta or guru by the mercy of Sri Hari and then one gets Sri Hari by the mercy of guru.

How to remove all our sufferings?

"I am glad to know that all your family members are observing Bhakti-Sada-char and nobody is taking onions, garlics etc. which cannot be offered to Lord. “Harinam” is the medicine and “Mahaprasad” is the diet for overcoming the disease of births and deaths (Bhava Vyadhi). If you do not take proper diet, only medicine will not be effective. The root-cause of our afflictions is our averseness to Sri Krisna. In our real selves we are all eternal servants of Sree Krishna. When we forget Him, Maya envelopes us and we become entangled in the cycles of births and deaths.
The moment we shall submit to Sree Krishna unconditionally, our all ills and sufferings will go. A surrendered soul has got no separate desire of his own. He is happy in whatever circumstance he is put to by the will of His Beloved Supereme Master.”

“Our Most Revered Gurudeva often used to say birth, death and marriage are not in the hands of the human beings, are controlled by Supreme Lord. Parents have got the duty to perform arrangement of marriage, but the fruits are controlled by Supreme Lord. Actually we have got our eternal real relations with Supreme Lord Sree Krishna. All the relations in this world are temporary and perishable. Devotees should have this sort of firm belief that Supreme Lord Sree Krishna is the only maintainer and sustainer.”

How to Remove Drawbacks

When a person sincerely perform Bhajan , he feels his drawbacks. Now when you are trying to perform Bhajan for GOD realisation, you are facing so many hurdles on the way to reach the ultimate goal, so many drawbacks of which you had no feeling earlier. This is a long journey. You have only started

Bhajan. Nothing can be achived all of a sudden. It will take time. It depends upon the tenacity of purpose and wholehearted sincere endeavour.

As long as we cannot give up our material egos, it will not be possible to eradicate mundane vanities and drawbacks. Misconception of self is the root cause of self-arrandizment, deceitfulness and other drawback. It is not easy for an enslaved Jiva to give up mundane egos, so naturally it is very difficult to remove those shortcomings. By constant companion of bone fide Sadhus and by steadfast practice of different forms of devotion with submission to real sadhus, we can gradually remove our shortcoming. It will take time. It depends upon the intensity of Sadhan. Nothing could be achived all of a sudden. This is also true when we actually perform Sadhan, we can realise our defects and drwabacks and we become humble.

We became more and more humble when we come in contact more and more with Sri Krishna Who is Absolute Good. This humbleness is not bad. When we come in touch with light, we can then realise that we were in darkness.

Hrid rog kam

(Lust -the disease of the Heart)

Preface

The constitutional position of the jīvātmas is that they are the eternal servants of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sree Kṛṣṇa, but, due to a competitive spirit, some of them desire to interact with the bahiraṅgā-śakti (external material potency) of the Lord, as it allows them to think of themselves falsely as

controllers rather than the eternal spiritual servants they actually are. By the grace of Guru- Vaiṣṇava-Bhagavān, a person can realize that lust in the heart, manifested as the exploitation of other living beings and material nature, is the root cause of all the strife, conflict and chaos that we observe in the world. Aversion, rather than devotion to God, and the replacement of His desires with ours in the name of self-interest, cannot bring about a co- operative and peaceful society.

When one suffers from a disease one approaches a physician, a specialist in his or her field. As there is no material solution to this fundamental dilemma of the jīvātma, i.e. misplaced and distorted desire, we must approach a qualified spiritual practitioner, a spiritual physician, who can offer expert advice on how to overcome this disease. Such a person will prescribe the appropriate medicine which, when imbibed according to his or her specific instructions, will bring about a permanent cure.

His Divine Grace Sreela Bhakti Ballabh Tīrtha Goswāmī Mahārāj is accepted as a superlative example of such a spiritual physician by the disciples of His Divine Grace Sreela Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura Prabhupād. In this book, he has thoroughly identified this profound defect of the living beings' temperament by means of his vast knowledge of śāstra (scripture), intimate connection to his predecessor āchāryas and personal insight as a pure devotee of Lord Sree Kṛṣṇa. He has also kindly provided a detailed analysis of the means to banish this demon of lust from the heart. Any person fortunate enough to read this publication will not only acquire an appreciation of the depth of the problem of impure desire, but will also hopefully be inspired to undertake the means of its eradication or to increase their present efforts to eradicate it.

We pray for the divine blessings of our Most Revered Gurudeva and Their Lordships Sree Sree Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa that this humble offering may please Them, as Their desire is our desire. We also humbly request the reader to forgive us for any accidental errors or omissions that may have occurred in this work.

Vaiṣṇava Dāsānudās,

Akinchana Dās, U. K.

HDG Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj (translation from original Bengali)

dhyāyato viṣayān puṁsaḥ saṅgas teṣūpajāyate saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmaḥ kāmāt krodho 'bhijāyate

krodhād bhavati sammohaḥ sammohāt smṛti-vibhramaḥ smṛti-bhraṁśād buddhi-nāśo buddhi-nāśāt praṇaśyati (Srīmad Bhagavad Gīta) 2.62-63

'While contemplating the objects of the senses, a person develops attachment for them, and from such attachment lust develops, and from lust anger arises. From anger, complete delusion arises, and from delusion bewilderment of memory. When memory is bewildered, intelligence is lost and when intelligence is lost one falls down into the pit of worldly life.'

These instructions of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa are meant for all living entities although they were spoken to Arjuna, who was playing the pastime of being in great distress. They should be accepted and followed by the sincere votaries earnestly desiring their own eternal benefit. The scriptural quotes are not to be used with an intention to instruct others and rectify them. When one personally acts upon those instructions, that power will automatically influence others. Only the instructions of those great personalities, who have actual love for all living beings, can bring about positive transformation in others. All other's efforts go in vain.

Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākur, the personal associate of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, has written, ‚Carefully meditate upon the futility of false renunciation (phalgu-vairāgya) while following scriptural injunctions (vidhimārga). Even while repeatedly practicing detachment, when the objects of worldly sense pleasures (viṣaya) appear in the mind, the association or attachment with those objects begins. From this, intense desire (kāma) sprouts which results in anger (krodha). Anger leads to infatuation (moha) which in turn leads to delusion (smṛti-vibhram). Consequently the intelligence is lost (buddhi-nāśa) which finally results in total devastation. So the path of false renunciation mentioned in scriptures, in most occasions, lead to such a state and hence this path is full of impediments.

In his commentary to this verse, Śrila Viśwanāth Chakravartīpād has written - The one who is steadily situated in consciousness (sthita-prajña) controls his external senses by subjugating the mind. In this verse an indication of the consequences that occur due to an uncontrolled mind is made. The five knowledge acquiring senses are - eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin, and the objects of these senses are - form, sound, smell, taste and touch. By contemplating the objects of the five material senses one gets attached to them. That leads to an intense desire to obtain them. When the desire is not fulfilled, anger arises. Anger leads to infatuation which in turn results in the loss of discrimination between good and bad. This leads to the forgetfulness of scriptural instructions which are meant for one's own welfare. Due to the loss of intelligence one faces complete devastation i.e. falling down in the pit of worldly life.

The commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākur to the 59th verse of the second chapter of Bhagavad Gita - viṣayā vinivartante nirāhārasya dehinaḥ rasa-varjaṁ raso 'py asya paraṁ dṛṣṭvā nivartate - is to be considered very carefully. The prescription of abstaining from the objects of the senses in order to get detachment from them is meant only for highly ignorant enslaved jīvas in the bodily consciousness. The eight limbed yoga system (aṣṭānga-yoga) containing the practices like self- restraint (yama), fixed observance (niyama), posture (āsana), breath regulation (prāṇāyāma) and abstraction (pratyāhāra) for detachment from the sense objects are meant for such a class of people. But such practices are not acceptable for one who is firmly fixed in consciousness (sthita-prajña). The sthita-prajñas, having envisioned the elegance of the Highest Truth (param-tattwa), get attracted to that and give up the menial attraction towards gross worldly objects. Although the prescriptions for controlling the senses by restraining them are available for highly ignorant people, the greatest eternal welfare cannot embrace the living entities other than through the path of attachment to Highest Truth (rāga-mārga). Only the attachment to a superior object makes one give up the attraction towards inferior objects.

As an example, for a person who has only seen and tasted impure molasses (jaggery) and never tasted the pure molasses, even if someone tries to convince him about the filthiness and tastelessness of impure molasses, he cannot give up his attraction for it. But upon tasting the pure molasses his attraction to the

impure molasses is automatically vanished, not to speak of tasting even higher objects like sugar or candy. In a similar way, one’s attachment to inferior objects cannot be ended unless a superior taste is relished. Only when an ignorant person is made to taste a superior object by one who has realisation and has tasted that object, will their attraction to inferior objects fade away. Otherwise an ignorant person cannot give up their fascination towards inferior objects by their own efforts.

A person who has got realisation of the Supreme Lord is not just rare, but extremely rare to be found in this world.

muktānām api siddhānāṁ nārāyaṇa-parāyaṇaḥ

su-durlabhaḥ praśāntātmā koṭiṣv api mahā-mune (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 6.14.5)

Koṭi mukta madhye durlabha eka kṛṣṇa bhakta - Out of many millions of liberated persons, a pure devotee of Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is very difficult to find. (Śrī Chaitanya Charitāmṛta Madhya 19.148).

As a pure devotee is rare, so is a fortunate surrendered practitioner. Among the ordinary souls, the scarcity of a person completely detached from the material sense objects is because of the scarcity of such a sincere votary.

manuṣyāṇāṁ sahasreṣu kaścid yatati siddhaye

yatatām api siddhānāṁ kaścin māṁ vetti tattvataḥ (Śrīmad Bhagavad Gīta 7.3)

Śrila Bhaktivinode Thakur, describing the underlying implications (marmānuvād) of the above verse writes -- 'Among innumerable living entities, human birth is rare. Among many thousands of human beings only few endeavour for perfection, and of those who have achieved perfection, hardly one knows Me or My Personal Form in truth. The jñānis (empirical philosophers) and the yogis (practitioners of yoga) mentioned in the previous six chapters (of Śrīmad Bhagavad Gīta) can easily attain knowledge of the impersonal Brahman (brahma-jñāna) by their endeavours. But it is impossible for them to acquire knowledge of Bhagavān (Personal Form of Lord), which is finer than the object of their meditation.'

There is no need to be disheartened from learning that the Supreme Lord is rarely obtained because He is easily attainable for those who are completely surrendered to Him.

bahūnāṁ janmanām ante jñānavān māṁ prapadyate

vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti sa mahātmā su-durlabhaḥ (Śrīmad Bhagavad Gīta 7.19)

'After many births, one who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me, knowing Me to be the cause of all causes and all that is. Such a great soul is very rare.'

He is unattainable to the followers of the ascending process (ārohavād) but easily attainable for the surrendered – praṇatābhi gamyam mūḍhaiva vedyam. Śrī Prahlād instructs the demoniac boys:

na hy acyutaṁ prīṇayato bahv-āyāso 'surātmajāḥ ātmatvāt sarva-bhūtānāṁ siddhatvād iha sarvataḥ (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 7.6.19)

'My dear sons of the demons, it is not at all difficult to please Achyuta (from Whom nobody can be detached) Śrī Hari. It is very difficult to win the hearts of those who are connected with the body. But since the Supreme Lord Śrī Hari is situated as the dear-most person in the hearts of all the living beings, one does not have to undergo hardships to search for Him or please Him.'

One does not even need any articles to serve Him as He can be served through one's mind. Just by sincerely praying from the core of the heart, 'Hey Prāṇa-nāth (Lord of my life) kindly be pleased' He can be satisfied. There is no consideration of age in order to worship Him. A surrendered soul can please the Supreme Lord simply by hearing and chanting His Name, Form, Glories and Pastimes. The Supreme Lord possesses love and affection of millions of mothers and fathers for all the jīvas. Although the relations in this world are material in nature and are motivated materially, it can be seen that the mother's affection towards her child is such that she accepts the food from the mouth of her child

even though it is mixed with the child’s saliva.

In a similar manner, the Supreme Lord does not consider any material qualifications of a person; He only sees the surrender, faith, devotion and love of that person. Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī in his composition Padyāvali quotes a verse from a poet of South India:

vyādhasya ācaraṇaṁ dhṛuvasya ca vayoḥ vidyā gajendrasya kā kubjāyāḥ kimu nāma rūpamadhikaṁ kiṁ taṁ sudāmno dhanam vaṁśa ko vidurasya yādavapaterugrasya kiṁ pauruṣam

bhaktyā tuṣyati kevalaṁ na ca guṇaiḥ bhakti-priyo mādhavaḥ

'What good conduct did hunter (vyādha) have? What was the age of Dhruva? What great beauty did Kubja possess? How much wealth did Sudāma brāhmin have? Did Vidura belong to a respectable family lineage? What courage did the Lord of the Yādavas, Ugrasena possess? The Supreme Lord Mādhava, who is fond of devotion, is satisfied only through devotion and not by possessing countless worldly qualities.'

Śrī Raghunandan Ṭhākur, the son of Śrī Mukunda Dās, who is the personal associate of Śrīman Mahāprabhu and who hailed from Śrikhanḍa, fed laḍḍu (a kind of sweet ball) to his family deity Śrī Gopīnāth in his childhood. This pastime is poetically written by Śrī Uddhav Dās in the scripture Śrī Bhaktiratnākara.

Uddhav Das's song –

prakaṭa śrīkhanḍa vās nām śrī mukunda dās ghare sevā gopīnāth jāni

gelā kono kāryāntare sevā karibār tare śrī raghunandane ḍāki āni (1)

ghare āche kṛṣṇa sevā yatna kare khāoāibā eta boli mukunda calilā

pitār ādeśa pāña sevār sāmagrī laiyā gopīnāther sammukhe āilā (2)

śrī raghunandana ati vayaḥ-kram śiṣumati khāo bole kāndite kāndite

kṛṣṇa se premer vaśe nā rākhiyā avaśeṣe sakala khāilā alakṣite (3)

āsiyā mukunda dās kahe bālaker pāś sakal naivedya āna dekhi

śiśu kahe bāp śuno sakali khāila punaḥ avaśeṣe kichui nā rākhi (4)

śuni aparūpa hena vismita hṛdaye punaḥ āra dine bālake kahiya

sevā anumati diyā bāḍīr bāhira haiya punaḥ āsi rahe lukāiya (5)

śrī raghunandana ati haiya hariṣamati gopīnāthe lāḍḍu diyā kare

khāo khāo bole ghana ardheka khāite hena samaye mukunda dekhi dwāre (6)

ye khāila rahe hena āra nā khāila punaḥ dekhiyā mukunda preme bhor

nandan kariya kole gadgad sware bole nayane variṣe ghana lor (7)

adyāpi śrīkhanḍa pure ardha lāḍḍu āche kare dekhe yata bhāgavanta jane

abhinna madana jei śrī raghunandana sei e uddhav dās rasa bhane (8)

'This pastime was manifest in Śrīkhanḍa where Mukunda Dās used to live. He used to serve Śrī Gopīnāth deity in his house. One day when he went outside for some work, he called his son Raghunandan in order to give him the service of the deity. Mukunda said to his son, "Serve the Lord in our house and feed Him with care" and left the house. Being ordered by his father, Raghunandan brought the articles for the service of Gopīnāth in front of Him. The child was very innocent, so he cried and pleaded with Gopīnāth to eat the offerings. Subdued by his love, Gopīnāth ate all the offerings without leaving any remnants. After Mukunda Dās returned home he told his son, "Please bring the prasād." In reply the boy told, "Listen father, Gopīnāth ate everything without leaving any remnants." Hearing this wonderful incident Mukunda was astonished, so again he called his son, asked him to serve Gopīnāth and went out of the house. He came back after a while and stayed hidden. The much pleased Raghunandan gave laḍḍu in the hands of Gopīnāth and repeatedly persuaded Him to eat. After eating half of the laḍḍu Gopīnāth saw Mukunda at the door. He stopped eating and remained in the current posture. Mukunda was overcome with feelings of love. He took his son on his lap and spoke in a choked voice while tears rolled down his eyes incessantly. Even now in Śrīkhanḍa fortunate persons get the darśan of the Gopīnāth's deity with a half laḍḍu in His hand. The Supreme Lord Madana (Kṛṣṇa) and His associate Śrī Raghunandan are non- different. Uddhav Dās sings such sweet pastimes.'

The Supreme Lord is subdued only through devotion, not by any other means.

bhaktyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ śraddhayātmā priyaḥ satām bhaktiḥ punāti man-niṣṭhā śva-pākān api sambhavāt (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.14.21)

'Saintly persons (sādhus) attain Me, the Supersoul (paramātma) and the dearest form, only through the strength of unalloyed devotional service aroused from their firm faith in Me. Even the low class men (canḍālas) are purified by one pointed devotion unto Me.'

patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyaṁ yo me bhaktyā prayacchati tad ahaṁ bhakty-upahṛtam aśnāmi prayatātmanaḥ (Śrīmad Bhagavad Gīta 9.26)

The Supreme Lord accepts even a leaf, flower, fruit and water, if offered with devotion. Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākur has written in this context - "I do not accept the articles offered by the worshippers of the demigods with a temporary faith in Me, even if it is done with great endeavour, because they worship Me with ulterior motives." The Supreme Lord does not accept the offerings of a non-devotee. bhakter dravya prabhu kāri' kāri' khāi, abhakter dravya pāne ulaṭi ' na cāi – The Supreme Lord grabs and eats the articles of His devotees but He does not even glance at the articles of non-devotees.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa accepted the insignificant offerings of His one-pointed devotees Vidura and his wife after rejecting many luxurious and palatable food offerings by His non-devotee Duryodhana.

The original personality of Godhead Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu has made it known to the world about the identity of a truly wealthy and fortunate person through His own personal associate Śrī Śrīdhar, who was playing the pastime of a poor person and lived by selling the products of banana trees. Supreme Lord Śrīman Mahāprabhu's pastimes of snatching the articles of His one-pointed devotee Śrīdhar are most wonderful and nectarean.

pratidin cāri danḍa kalaha kariyā tabe se kiniye dravya ardha-mūlya diyā satyavādī śrīdhar yathārtha mūlya bole ardha-mūlya diyā prabhu nija haste tole

uṭhiyā śrīdhar dās kare kārākāri eimata śrīdhar-ṭhākurer hurāhuri

(Śrī Chaitanya Bhāgavat Madhya 9.163-165)

'Everyday Mahāprabhu used to quarrel with Śrīdhar for four danḍas (1 danḍa = 24 mins). Only after that would He buy the goods from Śrīdhar at half the price. The honest Śrīdhar would quote the exact price and the Lord used to pay him only half of it. He would take away the goods with His own hands and Śrīdhar used to grab his goods back. In this way a tussle between the two would arise.'

prabhu bole 'bhālo bhālo, āra nāhi dāi' śrīdhar khole prabhu pratyaha anna khāi bhakter padārtha prabhu henamate khāi koṭi haileo abhakter ulaṭi' nā cāi

(Śrī Chaitanya Bhāgavat Madhya 9.184-185)

'The Lord used to say, "It is alright, you don't have to give Me anymore." Every day the Lord would eat rice with the bananas snatched from Śrīdhar. In this way the Lord accepts the offerings of His devotee but never even glances upon the innumerable offerings of a non-devotee.'

Śrīdhar fell unconscious at the courtyard of Śrīvas's house (Śrīvāsāngan) upon envisioning the opulent form of the Lord during His Mahāprakāśa-līla. He regained consciousness listening to the words of Mahāprabhu and composed wonderful prayers to the Lord, being empowered by His mercy. Pleased with His prayers Mahāprabhu wanted to award him the benediction of eight-fold mystic perfections (aṣṭa-siddhi) but Śrīdhar would not accept that, instead praying only for the service of the lotus feet of Mahāprabhu.

'māga māga' punaḥ punaḥ bole viśwambhar

śrīdhar bolaye - "prabhu, deha ei var ye brāhmaṇa kār' nila mora kholapāta

se brāhmaṇa hauk mora janma janma nātha ye brāhmaṇa mora sange karila kondal mora prabhu hauk tāṅra caraṇayugal

(Śrī Chaitanya Bhāgavat Madhya 9.223-225)

'Viśwambhar (Mahāprabhu) repeatedly asked Śrīdhar to request a boon. In reply Śrīdhar said, "My dear Lord, may that Brāhmin, Who forcefully snatched my banana leaves, become my Lord life after life. May the feet of that Brāhmin, Who quarreled with me, be my eternal object of worship."'

After the deliverance pastimes of the Chāndkāzi, Śrīman Mahāprabhu, while performing sankīrtan with a group of devotees, crossed the market places of conch shell sellers and cloth weavers and reached Śrīdhar’s place for rest. There, He drank water using a broken iron vessel with great satisfaction. Seeing Mahāprabhu drink water from a broken vessel, Śrīdhar cried out loudly and fainted. By this pastime Śrīman Mahāprabhu instructed that one gets devotion by accepting offerings from a devotee. He considers the water in a devotee's place even from a broken vessel to be equal to nectar. On the other hand, He rejects the water offered by a proud non-devotee even if it were in an ornamental vessel.

Before Mahāprabhu left home to accept sannyās, He used to relish the bottle gourd offered by Śrīdhar with great affection. Sacīmāta used to cook a sweet preparation made with milk and bottle gourd for Mahāprabhu.

While performing devotion it is necessary for one to understand the difference between devotion and anti-devotion. By the fruits of an action one can ascertain the true nature of the performed action. In his book Śrī Bhajan Rahasya, Śrī Bhaktivinode Ṭhākur has given evidence from the eleventh canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam regarding the symptoms of advancement in unalloyed devotion.

bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo viraktir anyatra caiṣa trika eka-kālaḥ prapadyamānasya yathāśnataḥ syus tuṣṭiḥ puṣṭiḥ kṣud-apāyo 'nu-ghāsam (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 11.2.42)

'Just as one feels satisfaction, nourishment and relief from hunger simultaneously with every morsel of food he takes, so in a similar way while performing devotional service a surrendered person gets devotion, higher realisation of his eternal relation with the Lord and detachment to material objects and relations at the same time.'

A surrendered soul attains realisation of the Lord and aversion to things not in relation to the Lord as soon as he performs devotional service. If this does not happen, it is to be understood that it is not devotion. Though it may appear to be devotion from outside, actually he is not surrendered.

Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī has written in Śrī Bhaktirasāmṛta sindhu (Pūrva vibhāg 1.17):

kleśāghnī śubhadā mokṣa-laghutā-kṛt sudurlabhā sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā śrīkṛṣṇa-ākarṣiṇī ca sā

sa (that); bhakti (devotion); kleśāghnī (drives away miseries); śubhadā (brings about auspiciousness); mokṣa-laghutā-kṛt (makes liberation insignificant);

sudurlabhā (very rare); sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā (experiences highly condensed bliss); śrīkṛṣṇa-ākarṣiṇī (attracts the all-attractive Śrī Kṛṣṇa); ca (and).

Even after performing devotion, if a person is still troubled by miseries, is devoid of auspiciousness, has not realised the insignificance of liberation, does not feel the highest bliss and has no attraction towards Śrī Kṛṣṇa, it is to be understood that it is not actual devotion.

'There are two characteristics of sādhana bhakti (devotion performed with rules and regulations) - kleṣāghni (drives away miseries) and śubhadā (auspiciousness arises). The two characteristics of bhāva bhakti (devotion with ecstatic feelings) are mokṣa-laghutā-kṛt (belittles liberation) and sudurlabhā (very rarely achieved) and the two characteristics of prema bhakti (devotion with spontaneous love) are sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā (full of condensed transcendental bliss) and śrīkṛṣṇa-ākarṣiṇī (attracts the all-attractive Śrī Kṛṣṇa).'

ajñāna-tamera nāma kahiye 'kaitava' dharma-artha-kāma-mokṣa-vāñchā ādi saba tāra madhye mokṣa-vāñchā kaitava-pradhāna yāhā haite kṛṣṇa-bhakti haya antardhāna

kṛṣṇa-bhaktira bādhaka—yata śubhāśubha karma sei eka jīvera ajñāna-tamo-dharma

(Śrī Chaitanya Charitāmṛta Ādi 1.90, 92, 94)

'The darkness of ignorance is called kaitava, the way of cheating. It manifests in four forms - religiosity, economic development, sense gratification and liberation. Among these four, liberation (mokṣa) or the desire to merge in the Supreme Lord is the foremost cheating process because this leads to a complete disappearance of devotion for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. All kinds of activities, both auspicious and inauspicious, that are hindrance to devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa are nothing but activities in darkness of ignorance.'

ātmendriya-prīti-vāñchā—tāre bali 'kāma'

kṛṣṇendriya-prīti-icchā dhare 'prema' nāma (Śrī Chaitanya Charitāmṛta Ādi 4.165)

'The desire to satisfy one's own senses is called lust (kāma). The desire to please the senses of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is called transcendental love (prema).'

ataeva kāma-preme bahuta antara kāma—andha-tamaḥ, prema—nirmala bhāskara (Śrī Chaitanya Charitāmṛta Ādi 4.171)

'Therefore, lust and love are quite different. Lust is like dense darkness whereas love is like the bright sun.'

Kāma, the desire to satisfy one's own senses, is the heart disease (hṛd-rog) of all jīvas. In other words, it is the desire to enjoy worldly pleasures and more precisely, all desires other than the satisfaction of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The cause of kāma is the misidentification of the self with perishable body. Ignorance is the cause of such misconception. The cause of ignorance is aversion to Absolute Knowledge, the Undivided Truth, the Supreme Godhead.

vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam brahmeti paramātmeti bhagavān iti śabdyate (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 1.2.11)

'The learned transcendentalists who know the Undivided Absolute Truth describe it as Brahman, Paramātmā or Bhagavān.'

Brahman (impersonal form) is larger than the largest, paramātma (Supersoul) is smaller than the minutest and bhagavān is the Absolute Truth, in Whom everything including minuteness (aṇutva), hugeness (vibhutva) and in between the two (madhyatva) exists simultaneously. And among the infinite forms of Godhead (bhagavān), the highest form is Nandanandan Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who is the cause of all descents (avatāras) and the original Personality of Godhead (svayaṁ bhagavān).

īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ anādir ādir govindaḥ sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam (Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā 5.1)

'Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who is also known as Govinda is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He has an eternal, cognisant and blissful spiritual form. He has no origin but He is the origin of everything. He is the prime cause of all causes.'

ete cāṁśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam indrāri-vyākulaṁ lokaṁ mṛḍayanti yuge yuge (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 1.3.28)

'All the descents (avatāras) are either plenary portions or portions of the plenary portions of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Original Supreme Personality of Godhead. His descents (avatāras) appear on the planets to protect the saintly persons from the disturbances of the demons.'

advaya-jñāna tattva-vastu kṛṣṇera svarūpa brahma, ātmā, bhagavān—tina tāṅra rūpa (Śrī Chaitanya Charitāmṛta Ādi 2.65)

'Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the undivided Absolute Truth. He manifests in three forms as Brahman, Paramātmā and Bhagavān.'

bhakti-yoge bhakta pāya yāṅhāra darśana sūrya yena savigraha dekhe deva-gaṇa jñāna-yoga-mārge tāṅre bhaje yei saba brahma-ātma-rūpe tāṅre kare anubhava (Śrī Chaitanya Charitāmṛta Ādi 2.25, 26)

'The devotees see the Supreme Lord through their devotional service just as the demigods see the personality of sun. Those who worship Him following the paths of knowledge and yoga, realise Him as impersonal brahman and paramātma.'

Śrīman Mahāprabhu, through His instruction to Śrī Sanātan Goswāmī (sanātan śikṣa), taught that forgetfulness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the only cause of suffering of the jīvas - 'kṛṣṇa bhuli' sei jīva anādi- bahirmukh, ataeva māya tāre deya saṁsār duḥkha.

Śrī Jagadānanda Paṇḍit, the personal associate of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, has stated the following in the scripture Premavivarta:

citkaṇa - jīva, kṛṣṇa - cinmay bhāskar nitya kṛṣṇa dekhi' kṛṣṇe karena ādar

kṛṣṇa bahirmukha haiñā bhoga-vāncha kare

nikaṭastha māyā tāre jāpaṭiya dhare

'The living entity (jīva) is a particle of consciousness (citkaṇa), like particle of light emanating from the sun and Śrī Kṛṣṇa is complete consciousness, the transcendental Sun. When the living entities are inclined to the Eternal Absolute Truth Śrī Kṛṣṇa they worship Him. However, when they become averse to Him and desire material enjoyment, the illusory energy (māyā), who is staying close to them, binds them strongly.'

The divine energy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is impossible for the jīvas to overcome. Only those who are surrendered to His lotus feet can get liberated from the clutches of Māyā. He has emphatically declared this in Śrīmad Bhagavad Gīta (7.14).

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said in Gīta that lust (kāma) is the greatest enemy of all those jīvas whose hearts are infected with it. The living beings, becoming averse to Śrī Kṛṣṇa by their own free will and taking shelter of lust, undergo tremendous sufferings. They have created their own enemy, lust.

The words of Prahlād to his father Hiranyakaśipu (Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 7.8.9) is of utmost importance. Most Revered Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj explained this verse as - 'My dear father! Please give up your demoniac mentality. Do not discriminate in your heart between enemies and friends, make your mind equipoised towards everyone. Except for the uncontrolled and misguided mind, there is no enemy within this world. When one sees everyone on the platform of equality, one then comes to the position of worshipping the Lord perfectly.'

In this context two verses from the third chapter of Śrīmad Bhagavad Gīta (3.36, 37) are worth mentioning:

arjuna uvāca

atha kena prayukto 'yaṁ pāpaṁ carati pūruṣaḥ anicchann api vārṣṇeya balād iva niyojitaḥ

śrī-bhagavān uvāca kāma eṣa krodha eṣa rajo-guṇa-samudbhavaḥ mahāśano mahā-pāpmā

viddhy enam iha vairiṇam

Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākur explains the underlying implications (marmānuvād) of the above verses - 'After hearing this Arjuna said, "Oh descendent of Vṛṣṇi! What compels the living entities to engage in sinful activities even though not willing? You said that the jīva is an eternally pure conscious being and separate from material qualities and relations. So it is not the natural tendency of the jīvas to engage in sinful activities. But it is seen that they are always committing sinful activities. Please explain to me clearly who is engaging them in sinful activities." In reply the Supreme Lord said, "Arjuna! Lust (kāma) arising from the mode of passion makes the jīva commit sinful activities. Kāma is the desire to enjoy the material sense objects. Depending on circumstances this gets converted to anger (krodha). Lust originates from the mode of passion (rajoguṇa) and when there is a hindrance in fulfillment of the desires it gets converted to anger, which originates from the mode of ignorance (tamoguṇa). Lust is very fiery and devastating in nature. Understand this to be the greatest enemy of all living beings."'

In certain cases, the covering of this lust on the worldly beings is not so strong (this is the position of the desireless karma-yogis, where kāma is present in the form of a bud). When that covering is stronger, the living beings cannot remember the Supreme Lord in spite of getting a human birth. The consciousness of human beings who are extremely moral but do not believe in God are comparable with that of beasts and birds. When lust envelops the living entities further, they exist with covered consciousness like trees etc. The purity

of the consciousness of the living entities, who have not accepted the servitude of Śrī Kṛṣṇa by their free will, subsides and takes shelter of kāma. Consequently, the consciousness becomes covered gradually until it finally becomes inert. This state is called conditioning due to material activities (karma-bandha) or undergoing the miseries of the material world (saṁsāra-yātana).

In the sixteenth chapter of Śrīmad Bhagavad Gīta (daivāsurasampad vibhāga yoga) Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, "Those who are envious and cruel, who are the lowest among men, I perpetually cast into the ocean of material existence, into various demoniac species of life. In other words, the activities performed due to their nature gradually increase their demoniac mentality further and further. After being born in demoniac species these ignorant living beings sink down to the most abominable state of existence.

tri-vidhaṁ narakasyedaṁ dvāraṁ nāśanam ātmanaḥ kāmaḥ krodhas tathā lobhas tasmād etat trayaṁ tyajet

(Śrīmad Bhagavad Gīta 16.21)

'There are three gates leading to the hell of self destruction - lust (kāma), anger (krodha) and greed (lobha). Therefore intelligent persons give up these three completely.'

na jātu kāmaḥ kāmānām upabhogena śāṁyati haviṣā kṛṣṇa-vartmeva bhūya evābhivardhate

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 9.19.14)

'By pouring clarified butter (ghee) onto fire it cannot be extinguished but it will only increase. Similarly, if we fulfill our sense pleasures the hankering to enjoy keeps increasing and will not give deliverance from them.'

Our Most Revered Gurudeva used to assertively say that the remedy for the alleviation of desires is as follows -- If a small quantity of ghee is poured into the fire, it will increase the fire, but by pouring a huge quantity of ghee at a time, the

fire will get extinguished. Similarly, if we have intense craving for the Absolute Whole Śrī Kṛṣṇa, that craving will extinguish the fire of worldly desires, the sense gratification desires or kāma. As an example, Mahārāj Yayāti of the Chandra dynasty relinquished the desire for heavenly planets and aspired for the association of bona fide sādhus in order to obtain the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

After carefully considering the instructions of the Supreme Lord, the predecessor āchāryas (guruvarga) and the scriptures it can be concluded that there is no way other than devotion to the Supreme Lord to bring about all auspiciousness and drive away the heart disease kāma of the living entities.

Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī has explained the various stages of devotion to the Supreme Lord for the sincere votaries aspiring for ultimate benefit in his Bhakti-Rasamṛta-Sindhu (Pūrva vibhāg, fourth wave, verse 11):

ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu- saṅgo 'tha bhajana-kriyā tato 'nartha-nivṛttiḥ syāt
tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ athāsaktis tato bhāvas tataḥ premābhyudañcati
sādhakānām ayaṁ premṇaḥ prādurbhāve bhavet kramaḥ

'At first śraddhā ('śraddhā śabde viśwās kahe sudhṛḍha niścay, kṛṣṇa bhakti kaile sarva-karma kṛta haya' - śraddhā means a confident, firm faith that by performing devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa all other duties are performed), after that the association of bona fide devotees (sādhu sanga), following the spiritual practices (bhajana kriya), after that being freed from vices (anartha nivṛtti), thereafter steadiness in devotion (niṣṭha), followed by taste to perform devotional activities (ruci), that leads to attachment to the Supreme Lord (āsakti). These are the stages of sādhana bhakti. After this the preliminary stage of transcendental love of Godhead (bhāva) is aroused in the votary and finally attainment of the highest stage of transcendental love (prema). This is the gradual process of development of divine love in the practitioners (sādhakas).'

bhakti-mūla sukṛti haite środdhoday śraddhā haile sādhu-sanga anāyāse hay sādhu-sanga-phale hay bhajaner śikṣā bhajana-śikṣār sange nāma-mantra-dīkṣā bhajite bhajite hay anarther kṣay

anartha kharvita haile niṣṭhār uday niṣṭhā-nāme yata hay anartha-vināś nāme tata ruci krame haibe prakāś ruci-yukta nāmete anartha yata yāy tatai āsakti nāme bhaktajana pāy

nāmāsakti krame sarvānartha dūre hay tabe bhāvoday hay eita niścay

iti madhye asat-sange pratiṣṭha janmiyā kuṭīnāṭī dwāre dey nimna phelāiya ati sāvadhāne bhāi asat-sanga tyaja

nirantara parānande harināma bhaja

(Bhajan rahasya 1.7.)

'Faith originates by performing the deeds that cause devotion (bhakti-mūla sukṛti). From faith one easily gets saintly association (sādhu sanga), the fruit of which is receiving instructions pertaining to devotional service (nāma-mantra-dīkṣa). By performing devotion continuously, the misgivings in the heart will be destroyed (anartha nivṛtti) and one becomes steady in devotion (niṣṭha). To the extent one chants the Holy Name with firm faith, to that extent the anarthas will be washed out and gradually one develops taste for the Holy Name (ruci). As the anarthas vanish while chanting the Holy Name with taste, one gets attachment to it (asakti). At this stage all anarthas go far away and after that one develops ecstatic feelings (bhava) undoubtedly. However, if false prestige arises in between due to the association with non-saintly people, duplicity sprouts and it expels the votary to the lowest state. Therefore, carefully give up the association of non-devotees and blissfully serve the Holy Name uninterruptedly.'

varaṁ hutavaha-jwālā pancarāntaḥ vyavasthitiḥ na śouri-cintā-vimukha-jana samwāsa vaiśasam

(Kātyāyan Saṁhitā, Bhakti-Rasāmṛta-Sindhu Purva 2.51)

'Staying in a blazing fire or being encaged is a lot better than the danger of associating with those who are averse to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.'

I had the opportunity to hear from Most Revered Gurudev, the founder ācharya of Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, about the superiority of the gopīs and the paramount devotion of Śrīmati Rādhika, among the various ranks of devotees. Both Dhruva and Prahlād realised the Supreme Lord through devotion but Prahlād's realisation is superior to that of Dhruva's. Dhruva's devotion was actuated by desire (sakām) and he later became free of material desires (niṣkām). Prahlād's devotion, however, was without any material motivation from the beginning. Hanumān is superior to Prahlād. Prahlād had no scope to hear and sing the glories of the Lord and had no opportunity to serve his object of worship by engaging all the sense organs because he was living in a hostile environment. Hanumān, on the other hand, had the opportunity to carry out the direct orders of his beloved eternal master Śrī Rāmachandra and to serve Him in various ways as an obedient servant. To the extent one performs service to the Lord to that extent one attracts the affection of the Lord. Hence, Hanumān is superior to Prahlād in devotion. Furthermore, Arjuna, one of the Pāṇḍavas, by whose devotion in the mood of friendship (sākhya ras) Śrī Kṛṣṇa had become a chariot driver and followed his command, is superior to Hanumān. The Yādavas are superior to the Pāṇḍavas as Śrī Kṛṣṇa took birth in the Yadu dynasty. They climb on the shoulders of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and place Him on theirs and play with Him unrestrictedly. Amongst the Yādavas, Uddhava is foremost. Śrī Kṛṣṇa sent him to Vrajadhām where he was utterly stupefied upon seeing the unfathomable divine love of the gopīs. He desired to take birth in Vrajadhām as a herb, shrub or a creeper. Among the gopīs, Rādhārāṇi is foremost.

Śrī Uddhava spoke these prayers -

āsām aho caraṇa-reṇu-juṣām ahaṁ syāṁ vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latauṣadhīnām

yā dustyajaṁ sva-janam ārya-pathaṁ ca hitvā bhejur mukunda-padavīṁ śrutibhir vimṛgyām

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.47.61)

'Alas! May I have the good fortune to be born in Vṛndāvan dhām as a shrub, creeper or herb, which are blessed with the opportunity of serving the lotus feet of the gopīs of Vraja. The gopīs have renounced their own kinsmen, who are difficult to be disowned, and they even abandoned the virtuous path as enjoined

by the Vedas for the sake of worshipping the lotus feet of Mukunda, which are sought by the emancipated saints.'

Śrī Uddhava prays to the dust of the lotus feet of the gopīs -

vande nanda-vraja-strīṇāṁ pāda-reṇum abhīkṣṇaśaḥ yāsāṁ hari-kathodgītaṁ punāti bhuvana-trayam

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.47.61)

'I continuously pray to the dust particles (servants) of the feet of the gopīs of Vrajadhām, whose recitation of the glories of Śrī Hari can sanctify the three worlds.'

The gopīs are serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa by completely surrendering themselves to Him. Therefore, they know Him completely and are entitled to sing His glories entirely.

The five chapters of rāsa (rāsa-līla) of the tenth canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam describe the following pastimes - statements and counter-statements between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the gopīs in order to enjoy the beauty of rāsa, the sudden disappearance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa from the rāsa, the gopīs wandering in various forests while frantically searching for Him and their anxious prayers in order to have His divine vision.

How can the enslaved jīvas, who are averse to Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, devoid of His darśan and bereft of the realisation of His sweetness, understand such higher pastimes? They consider these pastimes to be like that of an act of mundane gross sense pleasures of worldly men and women or heros and heroines and mistake their sense enjoyment to be Divine Love. Such ill-fated, ignorant and conditioned living beings fall into the danger of drowning in the ocean of the material world, where the miseries are never ending.

How can a jīva, entrapped by the external potency which is comprised of the three modes of material nature, realise the transcendental pastimes of the Lord's personal associates, who have tasted His loving proximity? Forever it is impossible. For this reason, after the narration of rāsa-līla Vedavyāsa Muni has

given a warning. Our Most Revered Gurudeva, during the course of his harikatha, would often caution his disciples in this matter.

naitat samācarej jātu manasāpi hy anīśvaraḥ vinaśyaty ācaran mauḍhyād yathārudro 'bdhi-jaṁ viṣam

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.33.30)

'A person who is incapable and ineligible should never engage in such activities even mentally. Just as, if anyone except Rudra drank the poison originating from churning the ocean they would definitely be destroyed. Similarly, if a person engages in such activities even due to gross ignorance, they will face destruction.'

Most Revered Śrīla Gurudeva used to define anīśwar in the above verse, when it refers to humans, as 'not īśwar' i.e. a person incapable of restraining their senses. It also means a person who does not believe in īśwar (God) i.e. the one who does not accept Śrī Kṛṣṇa to be parameśwar (Supreme Personality of Godhead) but considers Him to be an ordinary human being endowed with extraordinary powers. They say, "If Kṛṣṇa can play with billions of gopīs then what is the fault if an ordinary man plays with just three or four women? While Kṛṣṇa can enjoy ninety five percent, at least a five percent should be reserved for the common men." For those who desire to become a partner of Śrī Kṛṣṇa for enjoyment in this way, going through Śrīmad Bhāgavatam is forbidden, not to speak of the chapters of rāsa-līla. Śrī Kṛṣṇa has emphatically said in Śrīmad Bhagavad Gīta (9.24)

- *ahaṁ hi sarva-yajñānāṁ bhoktā ca prabhur eva ca, na tu mām abhijānanti tattvenātaś cyavanti te* - "I am the only enjoyer and the master of all sacrifices." Everything is meant for His enjoyment. The living entities, being enveloped by the illusory energy, act as enjoyers. They pose themselves as 'little Kṛṣṇas' and want to enjoy each other. This is the reason for a constant clashing between self interests of different people in this illusory world.

Śrīla Viśwanāth Chakravarti has written in his commentary that a person who does not believe in the Supreme Lord is lowly and inert. When those persons,

who do not believe in the supremacy of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, hear His pastimes with the gopīs, and consider them to be like mundane affairs between an ordinary man and woman, thus being completely covered by lust, they enter into hell. Rudra (Mahādeva) became blue necked (nīlakaṇṭha) after drinking the poison emanating from the ocean of milk (kṣīra-sāgara). Arudra (one who is not Mahādeva) will be destroyed by the mere smell of the poison, not to speak of drinking it.

A lusty person is always egoistic and proud because he sees the inferior objects of enjoyment. A devotee in loving mood for the Supreme Lord always envisions objects as superior to him and thus naturally remains humble. Such quality befits a devotee. If this quality does not exist he is not a devotee.

The stage before attaining prema (transcendental divine love) is bhāva (developing the ecstatic feelings). Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī has written in his book Śrī Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu about the symptoms of a devotee in whom the bud of bhāva sprouts -

kṣāntiḥ vyartha-kālatvaṁ viraktiḥ māna-śūnyatā āśā-bandhaḥ samutkaṇṭhā nāmagāne sadā ruci āsaktiḥ tad-guṇākhyāne prītiḥ tad-vasati-sthale ityādyo 'nubhāvāḥ syuḥ jāta bhāvānkure jane

(Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu, Pūrva 13.11)

'For devotees in whose heart the bud of bhāva has just grown, the following symptoms are manifest - remains un-agitated even if there is a cause of anxiety (kṣānti), does not waste even a moment in activities other than serving Śrī Hari (avyartha kālata), averse to things not in connection with Śrī Kṛṣṇa (virakti), remains humble in spite of being superior (mān-śūnyata), remains firm in the conviction to attain the Lord (āśābandha), extremely greedy to obtain the desired objective (samutkaṇṭha), has constant taste in chanting the Holy Name (nāmagāne sadā ruci), has intense attachment for glorifying the Lord's attributes (āsaktiḥ tad-guṇākhyāne) and has attraction towards His abode (prītiḥ tad-vasati-sthale).'

Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākur, in his own composition 'śuno he rasika jan,

kṛṣṇaguṇa agaṇan' in Kalyāṇ Kalpataru writes

vidhimārga-rata jane, *swādhīnatā ratnadāne rāgamārge karān praveśa*

rāga-vaśavartī haye, *pārakīya bhāvāśraye labhe jīva kṛṣṇa premāveśa*

'To the person fixed in regulative principles, the Holy Name bestows the jewel of independence, placing him on the path of spontaneous devotion (rāgamārga). That person, overcome by spontaneous attachment to the Lord, takes shelter of the pārakīya mood and goes on to become absorbed in the ecstatic love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa.'

One cannot achieve his cherished objective if he has no patience. In this regard the teachings of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī in Upadeśāmṛta (3rd verse) is to be specially remembered -

utsāhān niścayād dhairyāt tat-tat-karma-pravartanāt saṅga-tyāgāt sato vṛtteḥ ṣaḍbhir bhaktiḥ prasidhyati

'Being enthusiastic in practicing devotion, having firm faith, keeping patience in spite of delay in achieving the desired goal, executing the devotional principles like hearing and chanting the Lord's Name and glories, giving up sense gratification for pleasing the Lord, abandoning illicit connection with the opposite sex and the association of non-devotees and practicing devotional rules and regulations following the footsteps of saintly persons. By following these six principles one gets perfection in devotion.'

In the last verse of the five chapters about the rāsalīla in tenth canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, the rāsalīla is mentioned as being meant for uprooting kāma. This verse is to be specially thought over.

vikrīḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idaṁ ca viṣṇoḥ śraddhānvito 'nuśṛṇuyād atha varṇayed yaḥ bhaktiṁ parāṁ bhagavati pratilabhya kāmaṁ hṛd-rogam āśv apahinoty acireṇa dhīraḥ

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.33.39)

'When a sober person hears the rāsalīla pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa with the damsels of Vṛndāvan from Śrī Guru with firm faith and sings those pastimes he immediately attains pure devotion to the Supreme Lord and becomes successful in removing the heart disease kāma without any delay.'

Śrīla Viśwanāth Chakravartipāda has indicated in his commentary - The devotee who regularly hears, recites and sings the pastimes of rāsalīla, the crest jewel among all other pastimes, attains the highest stage of devotional life. Even if he has the heart disease kāma, by taking shelter of that devotion he can successfully destroy that disease in no time since prema is not weak and dependent like jñāna yoga (path of empirical understanding).

It can be ascertained thus that the heart disease kāma and the kāma in relation to the Supreme Lord are completely different. Only a sober person, who is aloof from the doctrine of atheistic ignorant fools that Divine Love can be attained in spite of being infected with the heart disease kāma, can comprehend this difference.

This subject cannot be understood by an offender of the Holy Name and a disbeliever of the scriptures. Without repeated submission to the gopīs of Vṛndāvan it is far-fetched and far-sighted for even an intelligent person with a vast amount of knowledge in the scriptures to relish this highest mellow (rasa), the path laid by the gopīs.

The predecessor scriptural preceptor of the Sāraswat Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava lineage, Śrīla Narottam Das Ṭhākur in the book Prema-bhakti-candrika has mentioned that the easiest way to be saved from the six vices (lust, anger, greed, illusion, madness and envy) is by directing them properly. Since envy (mātsarya) is

against Divine Love (prema), he did not mention any method to apply that in Kṛṣṇa's service. It is unnecessary to explain to a common man about the consideration of a high class devotee, for whom attaining excellence is possible.

'kāma' kṛṣṇa karmārpaṇe, 'krodha' bhakta-dveṣi jane 'lobha' sādhusange harikathā

'moha' iṣṭa-lābha bine, 'mada' kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāne niyukta kariba yathā tathā

'I will engage 'lust' by offering the fruits of my work to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, 'anger' towards those who are envious of devotees, 'greed' for hearing the topics about Śrī Hari in the association of sādhus, 'bewilderment' when the dear-most objective is not attained and 'madness' for singing the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.'

A votary aspiring for highest eternal welfare will apply 'anger' very cautiously on those who are envious of devotees. There is a lot of difference between anger arising from prema and that arising from kāma. The anger originated from prema is nectarean and beneficial for all but the anger arisen from kāma is poisonous and inauspicious for everyone. All activities directed towards satisfying Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His devotees (kārṣṇa) are always beautiful and all-auspicious. If the target is missed everything turns inelegant and inauspicious. Deceitful activities are always condemnable.

For example - the two sons of Kuvera, namely Nalakuvera and Manigriva, achieved the close vicinity of Śrī Kṛṣṇa after being cursed by a pure devotee Nārada; Śrīla Kṛṣṇa Dās Kavirāj Goswāmī chastised his own brother favouring Mīnaketan Rāmdas, a personal associate of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, and thus got the darśan of Śrīman Nityānanda Prabhu in a dream and attained Vṛndāvan dhām; even though Śrīman Mahāprabhu did not approve the order and instructions of Śrī Rāmachandra Pūrī, He never misbehaved with him or reproached him as he was the god-brother of His guru.

The main objective of worshipping the Supreme Lord is to satisfy Him. In this context there is a description in the fifth chapter of the seventh canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam where, in a reply to a question by Yudhiṣṭir Mahārāj, Śrī Nārada ṛṣi

says, "A glassworm confined in the hole of a wall by a bumblebee always thinks of the bee in fear and enmity and later becomes a bee because of such remembrance. Similarly, when the conditioned souls think about the Supreme Lord, who appears in a human form in this world through His own potency, even as an enemy, such remembrance of Him in the mind purifies them from all sins and they attain Him."

kāmād dveṣād bhayāt snehād yathā bhaktyeśvare manaḥ āveśya tad-aghaṁ hitvā bahavas tad-gatiṁ gatāḥ

gopyaḥ kāmād bhayāt kaṁso dveṣāc caidyādayo nṛpāḥ sambandhād vṛṣṇayaḥ snehād yūyaṁ bhaktyā vayaṁ vibho

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 7.1.30, 31)

'Everyone, whether pious or impious, will attain Him finally but the difference in the results obtained by them due to their different practices (sādhana) is to be deliberated logically. Many persons have become sinless and attained salvation (mukti) or love (prema) by constant remembrance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa either due to lusty desires (kāma), out of enmity (dveṣa), out of fear (bhay) or due to affection (sneha). Please listen attentively. The gopīs attained Him due to kāma, Kaṁsa due to bhay, Śiśupāla and other kings due to dveṣa, Vṛṣṇis due to their family relation (sambandha), you Pāṇḍavas by your sneha and we, general devotees, by devotional service.'

Śrīla Viśwanāth Chakravarti has written in his commentary - 'gopyaḥ kāmāt pūrva-vyākhyā-yuktaiva snehotthādeva, na tu sāmānyataḥ' - As mentioned earlier the Vraja gopīs attained Śrī Kṛṣṇa due to their lust arising from love but not by mundane lust, which is the desire to satisfy one's own self.

sahaja gopīra prema,—nahe prākṛta kāma kāma-krīḍā-sāmye tāra kahi 'kāma'-nāma

(Śrī Chaitanya Charitāmṛta, Madhya, 8.214)

'The gopīs have got natural love for the Supreme Lord. Their lusty desire is not to be compared with mundane lust. But since their transcendental love externally

appears to be like mundane lusty affairs, it is sometimes termed as lust.'

premaiva gopa-rāmāṇāṁ kāma ity agamat prathām ity uddhavādayo ’py etaṁ vāñchanti bhagavat-priyāḥ

(Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu 1.2.285)

'The pure love of the gopīs to Śrī Kṛṣṇa is sometimes considered to be lusty. The dear devotees of the Lord, headed by Śrī Uddhava, desire to taste that love.'

nijendriya-sukha-hetu kāmera tātparya kṛṣṇa-sukha-tātparya gopī-bhāva-varya nijendriya-sukha-vāñchā nāhi gopikāra kṛṣṇe sukha dite kare saṅgama-vihāra

(Śrī Chaitanya Charitāmṛta, Madhya, 8.216-217)

'The objective of lust is personal sense gratification but the only desire of the gopīs is to satisfy the senses of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The gopīs do not desire even a pinch for their own personal sense gratification. In order to give pleasure to Śrī Kṛṣṇa they mingle and enjoy with Him.'

The mood of Śrīmati Rādhika, the crest jewel among the one-pointed subservient devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa - the culmination of absolute love (prema) – is shown in the following verse:

nā gaṇi āpana-duḥkha, sabe vāñchi tāṅra sukha, tāṅra sukha—āmāra tātparya

more yadi diyā duḥkha, tāṅra haila mahā-sukha, sei duḥkha—mora sukha-varya

(Śrī Chaitanya Charitāmṛta, Antya, 20.52)

'I do not mind my personal distress. I only wish for the happiness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, for His happiness is the goal of My life. However, if He feels great happiness in giving Me distress that distress is the best of My happiness.'

A devotee does not have any separate happiness of his own other than pleasing

Śrī Kṛṣṇa. A devotee who is established in such a mood cannot be inflicted with pain by anybody.

Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswati Ṭhākur - Lust (kāma) is not the propensity of service attitude to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the all-knowing Personality of Godhead, but is distinguished as taking pleasure in things other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa. On the other hand, the objective of love (prema) is to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa and please Him only. The kāma of the gopīs is none other than prema because they do not desire for personal sense gratification. They engage other female companions (sakhīs) of their group (svajātīya) in His service and being ordered engage themselves in His service for His pleasure only, thereby satisfying the desire of Śrī Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇa-kāma).

sei gopī-bhāvāmṛte yāṅra lobha haya veda-dharma-loka tyaji' se kṛṣṇe bhajaya rāgānuga-mārge tāṅre bhaje yei jana sei-jana pāya vraje vrajendra-nandana

(Śrī Chaitanya Charitāmṛta, Madhya, 8.219-220)

'One who is attracted by that ecstatic love of the gopīs does not care about the Vedic principles and popular opinion, but instead renders service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa following the path of spontaneous love (rāga mārga) and attains Vrajendranandan of Vṛndāvan.'

Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākur in his commentary that flows with nectar (amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya): One who has faith in devotion with rules and regulations (vaidha bhakti – 64 forms of devotion) gets eligibility for it. The inhabitants of Vraja have natural love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. By seeing the gopīs love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the greed towards that mood makes one eligible to serve Him in spontaneous love (rāga mārga). For one serving on the path of spontaneous love, giving up attachment towards the varṇāśrama dharma and other Vedic dharmas is easily achieved.

Most Revered Śrīla Gurudev used to elaborately explain the significance of the two words śraddhānvita and anusṛṇuyāt in his purport to the verse vikrīḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idaṁ in the tenth canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. Those who attribute Śrī Kṛṣṇa with material qualities calling Him an ordinary mortal, a man

with extraordinary power, a superman, or an expert diplomatic politician, do not actually have faith in Him. Such people are not even entitled to hear Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, not to speak of the highest and the sweetest pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa with the gopīs. If such persons, lacking eligibility, hear these pastimes and consider them to be like lusty affairs between ordinary men and women, they fall down into the darkest regions of hell (raurava). One may get the eligibility to enter into these highest pastimes gradually after realising the Supreme Divinity of Śrī Kṛṣṇa by associating with His own personal associates and pure devotees. The mansion of devotion can be constructed on the spiritual foundation of the knowledge of the relationship with the Supreme Lord (sambandha jñāna).

The knowledge of the Lord will descend to the heart of a soul surrendered to the preceptorial channel. One should hear from a person who has heard the message of authentic scriptures (śrautavāṇi). A bona fide guru will reveal the esoteric, the more esoteric and the most esoteric pastimes of divine love to a disciple as per the disciple's eligibility. By one's personal endeavour in the ascending process (ārohapantha) none of these pastimes can be understood. It is impossible to enter into the most intimate pastimes by our own endeavour.

The living beings of this blessed Kaliyuga (iron age) are most fortunate because the highest objective and the greatest wealth, Divine Love (kṛṣṇa prema), is obtained just by performing congregational chanting (sankīrtana) of the Holy Names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrīman Mahāprabu said, 'harṣe prabhu kahena, - "śuna swarūpa rāmarāi, nāma sankīrtana-kalu parama upāy" – ‚Listen Swarūp Dāmodar and Rāi Rāmānanda, nāma sankīrtana is the greatest remedy in this Kaliyuga‛.

The instructions in his treatise about 'Teachings of Mahāprabhu' written by Most Revered Śikṣā Guru Śrīmad Bhakti Promode Purī Goswāmī Mahārāj (vide Śrī Chaitanya Vāṇī, 25th year Special Ed., 1st Issue, Pg. 62) is of special importance --- While having very strong inclination for tasting the mundane pleasures of the senses, the discussions about the divine transcendental mellows will never bear fruits. For that reason, our predecessor āchāryas, who have seen the Truth and who are our ever well wishers, have especially and repeatedly advised us to worship the Holy Name (nāma bhajan) with great reverence in order to gradually progress on the path of devotion. While displaying apathy towards nāma bhajan

it is highly dangerous to pose oneself as a devotee relishing the highest transcendental mellows (rasika bhakta).

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Humans lowering the status of humanity

The present-day world appears to be running fast towards destruction. As per Indian scriptural evidence, the conditioned souls are enveloped by Lord's illusory energy consisting of three primal qualities— Sattva, Rajah, and Tamah. `Tamah' indicates tendency to commit vice or to inflict injury. In fact, tamah tendency has now engulfed the whole world and is spreading over like fire and showing it's most monstrous destructive ugly appearance.

The sagacious persons are bewildered to find any solution of this terrible tendency of violence. By Rajah-guna living beings are created, by Sattva-guna they are maintained and by Tama-guna they are destroyed. Living beings are non-eternal. Human beings are the best amongst all kinds of created species, because they have got the discriminating power between good and bad, eternal and non-eternal, vice and virtue. Eating, sleeping, defending and mating are equal in beasts and human beings but human beings are superior because of their discriminating power. Practically it is demonstrated now that the human beings have become the greatest enemy of their own species. They are causing unnatural deaths without considering the innocence of the killed— whether they are children or women, whom the killers have never seen and who have never done any harm to the killers. It is the greatest shame of such human beings to claim the false vanity of being the best amongst created beings.

Lord does not think much about sins of other living beings who have got no such discriminating power. They do actions out of instinct. But God has bestowed discriminating power to human beings. In spite of that if they commit heinous crimes, surely they will be punished. They will never be spared. They are lowering the status of humanity. We may commit heinous crimes by deceiving ignorant human beings, beasts and birds, but we cannot deceive Supreme Lord

Who is Omniscient. Lord is residing in the heart of every individual soul.

Humble words of Srila Gurudeva on the occasion of Guru Puja

Now I am going to tell you about my condition when I first took shelter of the lotus feet of Srila Gurudeva. I was staying with my brother-in-law who was an officer, and I used to go to Calcutta University for study. At my first meeting with Srila Gurudeva, I told him, "I have had indifference to the world for a long time. I feel that the world is not eternal and that one day, my mother, father, brother, sister, and all others will be gone. All will be over. I become sad by thinking like this and feel like renouncing the world. But I have lust and a desire to enjoy; therefore I am afraid of the thought of renouncing the world. If I somehow renounce the world but then have to return to it later, friends will make fun of me and people of this world will laugh at me. So now, please tell me, will it be good for me to renounce the material world or not?"

In reply, Srila Gurudeva explained to me with great affection, "All right, you may lack something, but the Supreme Lord does not lack anything. He is infinite; his mercy has no limit."

After that I told Srila Gurudeva, "Seeing my innocence, my father has more affection for me than for my brothers. He has raised me, educated me, and has many expectations of me. I now have a chance to earn money and serve him. Will I not incur sin if I leave him at this time?"

Srila Guru Maharaj then recited this sloka of Bhagavad Gita:

sarva dharman parityajya
mamekam saranam vraja
aham tvam sarvapapebhyo
moksayisyami ma sucah

(BG 18.66)

He explained to me with great affection, "If you come here by giving up all of your responsibilities, Sri Krsna will free you from all sins. You need not worry about it or have any fear. I will further say that it will be a service to your father." After hearing his advice I felt that Srila Gurudeva liked me. I further inquired, "How should I leave home? If I take my bedding, they will catch me."

Srila Gurudeva replied, "Yes, very good, don't come with your bedding. Bring only your clothes."

I went home, and was leaving with some clothes when my father asked me, "Where are you going with your clothes?" I replied, "I have one friend. We will be benefited by meeting him; that is why I am going to meet him." My father thought that I had a friend who I would get some material benefit from. He did not know that only the sadhu is the true friend. So he happily gave me his permission to leave. In this way, I came by running away from home.

After I had joined the Math, I saw that sannyasis perform Guru puja on the appearance day of their gurudeva. Therefore our Gurudeva also performed worship of Srila Prabhupada on his appearance day. On Utthana ekadasi also, Srila Gurudeva used to worship Srila Prabhupada, and then we would perform Srila Gurudeva's worship. Srila Gurudeva was a personal associate of the Supreme Lord. Prabhupada also was not an ordinary human being. He shook the whole world. Our Gurudeva was serving the Supreme Lord 24 hrs a day. He had a most ideal character. He even chastened a rascal like me. Do you know why Srila Gurudeva made me an acarya?

He thought, "He has so many faults. He cannot be rescued unless he serves the vaisnavas. If I make him acarya, he will have to take care of all the vaisnavas, he will have to serve the vaisnavas, and in this way he will be rescued." Thinking like this, Srila Gurudeva appointed me acarya. In our system, becoming President or Math-in-charge does not mean becoming the master of the organization. I was appointed acarya so that I may serve Gurudeva's dependents. I have become acarya; this does not mean that I have become a big person, a worshipable person, and everybody should serve me. Such thinking will open the door to hell.

Today is the appearance day of Lord Ramacandra. I wanted to speak about Him,

but there is little time left. It will be difficult to speak more, but I will still speak about one of His pastimes. This happened after Lord Ramacandra had returned to Ayodhya from exile. With great honour, He was appointed as king. After becoming king, He gave a standing order to Laksmana to check if there was any hungry man at the door before taking meals.

One day Laksmana told Sri Ramacandra that He had just made a call to check, and nobody was hungry. Lord Ramacandra asked Him to go again and make a loud call to check if there was anyone remaining who was still hungry. Obeying the order of Lord Ramacandra, Laksmana went outside again and made a loud call. He did not see any men, but He saw a dog weeping there. Laksmana went back inside and told Lord Ramacandra that there was no one outside but a weeping dog. The Lord called for the dog. The Supreme Lord is the knower of all languages, so He asked the dog, "Why are you crying?"

The dog replied, "One brahmana has beaten me with a stick".

The Lord called for that brahmana and asked whether the dog was telling the truth. The brahmana replied, "Yes, this dog was sleeping on my path; that is why I beat him. These dogs sleep anywhere and everywhere; they should be beaten with a stick."

Lord Ramacandra understood that the brahmana was at fault, but what can you say to a brahmana? So, He asked the dog, "This brahmana beat you with a stick; now what do you want?"

The dog replied, "My Lord, let him become a math-in-charge."

On hearing the dog's reply, the Lord smiled and asked the dog, "This brahmana beat you with a stick and you want him to be appointed as a math-in-charge? He will get lots of service and many disciples by becoming a math-in-charge. What benefit will you get by this?"

Then the dog replied, "I was also a math-in-charge earlier. I did some wrong deed because of which I am now in the body of a dog and being beaten with sticks by everyone. If he becomes a math-in-charge, he will then become a dog and will be beaten with sticks. In this way his punishment will be complete." That is why there is a big risk in becoming a math-in-charge.

Srila Gurudeva's personality was completely unique. He used to execute even impossible tasks with the greatest of ease. The task of Srila Prabhupada's birth-place in Jagannatha Puri had been declared impossible by everybody, but he made it possible. Once, he went to the house of the Governor of Orissa for the work of Srila Prabhupada's birth-place. When we reached there, the Governor was leaving in his car. However, Srila Gurudeva's external appearance was so attractive that when the Governor saw Srila Gurudeva from a distance, he stopped his car. Srila Gurudeva was getting out of his car at that time. The Governor got out of his car, approached Srila Gurudeva, and offered his pranams. After talking for a while, he enquired about the reason for his coming.

Srila Gurudeva briefly told him about the birth-place of Srila Prabhupada. With great attention and faith, the Governor listened to Gurudeva and asked him to come inside. My point is that Srila Gurudeva was so attractive, even externally, that even an unknown person would become attracted by seeing him. I have all kinds of bad qualities in me. For my emancipation, Srila Gurudeva placed me in the midst of vaisnavas. Just so that if I start to fall, they will save me. Now everyone is sending me to the foreign countries. I think to myself, what is there in the foreign countries? I am not emancipated myself, how can I emancipate others? Here, there are Vrindavan dhama, Puri dhama, Ayodhya dhama, Mayapura dhama, and many other dhamas. Vaisnavas are all around to save me. Srila Gurudeva is not present, but it is the order of his elder godbrother that I should go abroad. Being very merciful towards me, he wrote me a letter in which he said that I must go to the foreign countries. If I disobey his order, I will be committing an offense. I asked him, "What will happen if I have a spiritual fall there? Falling down means, I will get thoughts other than that of the Supreme Lord. Then what?"

He replied, "Don't fear, that is our responsibility, you go." So now to follow the order of the vaisnavas, I am going abroad. It's getting very late now, some sankirtana should be performed.

If anybody takes shelter of Him, will he not be protected?

What are the original qualities of the sadhu? One is single-pointed devotion to the Supreme Lord and another is giving up varnasrama-dharma and bodily relations for the service of Sri Krishna. If you do this, then you are doing good to all. That is a sadhu. Another of the original qualities of the sadhu is that the sadhu likes to hear and speak only about Krishna:

Why does the sadhu wish to hear and speak only about Krishna? When the sadhu does not have the company of his beloved Supreme Lord, how can he live? How can he survive? He survives by singing the glories of the Supreme Lord, always hearing about and remembering Him. That is the life and soul of the sadhu. No sadhu can survive without hearing and speaking about Krishna. It is like water to a fish. A fish cannot remain without water. Similarly, without hearing about Krishna, without speaking about Krishna, without remembering Krishna, a sadhu cannot survive. That is his very life. That quality must be present in him. Having separation grief, he cannot remain without speaking about Krishna. That quality you must clearly be able to see: is whether or not he has the taste to hear and speak about Krishna‘s Name, Form, Attributes, etc.

The sadhu cannot speak for money or some other ulterior motive. Then it is not hari-katha, as it is not for Krishna:

"You have given up everything. You have taken shelter of the Supreme Lord, but you have no belief! The Supreme Lord is maintaining and sustaining the whole universe, even all the beings who are averse to Him. If anybody takes shelter of Him, will he not be protected? Do you not have such belief? You have to take money for giving Him service? Hearing is devotional service. Speaking for the satisfaction of Sri Krishna is also devotion."

"But, if we take no money, then how shall we live?"

"Then let us die! If no one gives us food for our service and we die, then let us die! What is the use of having this sort of belief? God is maintaining the whole universe. He will not maintain me? Why should I ask for this?"

If a person goes to another‘s house and starts working for him, without demanding anything, how long will the master of the house remain silent? Two or three days go by without feeding him. The master thinks, "He is working for me. How can I eat without giving him something?" That person might be a very bad person, but the master does not consider this. If anybody acts on behalf of the Supreme Lord, will He not protect him?

The Supreme Lord is All-Powerful. He maintains infinite brahmandas but does not give these worldly things to the devotees? So why should you accept money for speaking about the Supreme Lord. If you hear that sort of speech, then that person is speaking about the end, and that end is money.

If We Speak of Wordly Things, They Come to Our Minds

nayam atma pravacanena
labhyo na medhaya na
bahuna srutena yam evaiva
vrnute tena labhyas tasyaiva
atma vivrnute tanum svam
(2.23)
"God cannot be attained, realized by delivering lectures, by intellect, by becoming a great erudite scholar. The Supreme Lord will reveal His own Eternal Form only to a bonafide surrendered soul."

As my Divine Master has ordered me, I should speak whatever I have heard from Him and from my superiors, guruvarga (the line of teachers in the preceptorial channel). That recitation will purify my mind and take me to the Transcendental Realm. I should not speak to please the worldly people. If I do so, my spiritual life will be spoiled.

At a young age, I renounced the world and I took shelter at the Lotus Feet of Gurudev. I try to carry out the orders of my Divine Master to speak what I have heard so far from Him, from other Siksa Gurus (teachers) and from authentic scriptures. That recitation after hearing will purify my mind. Wherever I go, although I've got my drawbacks, I've got no hold over English or other languages, I try to carry out the orders of my Divine Master. If I go on speaking about worldly things, my mind will become attached to worldly things. If I speak about Krsna, my mind will go there. This is called "chanting"-- chanting of the glories of the Supreme Lord, His Name, Forms, Attributes and Pastimes. Chanting is one form of devotion; hearing is also a form of devotion. Pariksit Maharaja, by hearing only, got the ultimate goal of life. If we speak about worldly things, then worldly, temporary things will come to our minds. Ultimately, we shall have frustration in our life.

You will find at the end of the Gita, its glorification:

gita su-gita kartavya

kim anyaih sastra-vistaraih ya svayam padmanabhasya mukha-padmad-vinihsrta

"Gita should be rightly read, with one-pointed devotion for the satisfaction of Sri Krsna. No other scripture is needed if one takes shelter of the Gita. Gita emerges from the Holy Lips of Sri Krsna and is one with Him."

It is not material sound. In material sound, you will find the thing referred to by a sound is different from the sound. If you utter the word "water, water, water," the water-word is not the water- thing. The word "water" refers to a thing understood to be water. Here you will find a difference between the water-word and the thing referred to by the word "water." But Krsna and the Name of Krsna are One and the same. Gita and Krsna are identical. So, by taking shelter of the Gita we can have contact with Krsna. We have gone through the Gita, we have read the Gita, but we have no devotion to Krsna, This is not actual reading. If we read Gita actually, we will have devotion to Sri Krsna.

Imitation Vs Following

We should follow the teachings of the sadhu . We are not to place importance merely on external behavior. We must see the purpose for which sadhus are acting: for the service of Sri Krishna and the devotees. We should behave like the sadhu only when we understand the purpose of their behavior. We should follow, not imitate. What is the difference between following and imitation? This story may be given as an example.

There was once a peddler who maintained his family by selling caps. He would carry the caps on his head in a wicker basket. He would walk through the streets all day long selling these caps, taking his food along with him and eat along the way. He spent the day walking along the road, shouting, "Very nice caps for sale today! Price reduced! Take! Take! Take!" People would come and purchase his caps and he would thus maintain his family. But one day, even though he had spent the entire day shouting, he could not get any money. Not a single person had bought anything. Needless to say, he was very disappointed. Toward the afternoon, he became fatigued from so much walking. So, he sat under a big banyan tree. Being hungry, he ate the food that he had brought with him. After having eaten, he became drowsy and began to yawn. As he was so tired, he thought, "Let me lie down for some time." He spread a chadar on the grass beneath the tree and lay down. He placed the wicker basket, filled with caps, by the side of his head. He also kept a cap on his head and fell asleep.

After some time, some monkeys came from nearby and climbed up into the banyan tree. From the top of the tree, they could see that someone was sleeping underneath, who had a cap on top of his head, and next to him was a wicker basket-full of caps! "Oh!" they thought. "Let us get those caps!" They descended the tree and, silently, they approached the basket. Each monkey took one cap and put it on his head. In this way, all the caps were emptied from the basket. The monkeys became very satisfied with themselves by having put the caps on their heads. They climbed back up the tree and started to jump about from one branch to another with great delight, shrieking, "Kak! Koo! Kak! Koo!"

Hearing the sound of the monkeys, the peddler woke up. He was surprised to see that it was now evening. He looked at his wicker basket and saw that it was empty. "What? Not a single cap was sold but the caps are all gone! Who took them?" He looked about and saw the monkeys with the caps. "Now I have eaten all the food and have none left. If I have no food to give the monkeys, they will not return the caps." If you go to Vrndavana, there are many monkey-devotees there. Those monkeys will steal your spectacles. They will only return them if you give them some food. Now, this peddler realized that he had nothing to give the monkeys. "If they surround me, I shall be killed by them!" he thought.

He became enraged and shouted, "You have taken all that I have! Why have you not taken the cap on my own head? Here, you should take it!" He took his cap and threw it at them. The monkeys saw this and, taking their own caps in their hands, threw them at the peddler below. Because the peddler had thrown his cap

toward them, they also threw their caps toward him. Now their caps were on the ground and they were left with nothing. They do not know why one wears a cap. They simply imitate.

Such imitation is not good. "How is the sadhu sleeping? He is sleeping like this, so I shall have to sleep like that. How is he sitting? I shall have to sit like that. How does the sadhu take his steps?" All this is imitation. You have to know the purpose. You will be able to follow by knowing the purpose.

'Initiation' and 'Diksha' Synonymous?

The words 'Initiation' in the west and 'Diksha' in India are not synonymous. The words do not express completely the same meaning. India's spiritual characteristics and cultures are intrinsically different from the cultures prevalent in other countries in this world. Very often Indians find difficulty in using appropriate words to express their thoughts in other languages. This is because of the prevalence of materialistic way of thinking in other countries outside India.

Even after about sixty years of independence, we are to face dominance of the western culture in India and day by day the influence of foreign culture is increasing. To understand the implication of spiritual thoughts peculiar to India, it seems necessary to introduce some words in their languages. As per English Oxford dictionary, 'Initiation' means: admitting or introducing somebody to membership of a group etc, often by means of a special ceremony e.g. initiate somebody into a religious sect, secret society, etc. By the word 'initiation', externally it seems to be at par with 'diksha' for mentioning the words group, religious sect and secret society. The definition of 'diksha' is given in Hari-bhakti-vilas referring evidence from 'Vishnujamala'—

divyam jnanam yato dadyat kuryat papasya samksayam

tasmat dikseti sa prokta desikais tattyakovidaih

'The procedure by which self-effulgent knowledge (Divine Knowledge) is conferred, eradicates the cause of all sins and because of that it is stated as 'diksha' by the wise who have realized the Divinity.' In the word diksha, the knowledge is divine and self-effulgent, which indicates that self-effulgent knowledge descends through bona fide preceptorial channel from Supreme Lord.

Sin is the cause of sufferings. Cause of sin is desire for committing sin. Misconception of self is the cause of desire for committing sin. Nescience is the cause of misconception of self and aversion to Absolute Knowledge is the cause of nescience. So the root cause of sin is aversion to Sree Krishna, Who is All-Existence, All-Knowledge and All-Bliss. This Divine Knowledge only can be imparted by a bona fide Guru, the absolute-counterpart and grace-incarnate form of Supreme Lord. This implication of diksha is not clearly mentioned in the word initiation.

Divine knowledge descends to a completely surrendered soul through revelation. One who has got realization of Supreme Lord can impart that self-effulgent knowledge to others also, provided the aspirant has complete submission to Lord and His Absolute Counterpart Guru. Conditioned souls of the world are not eligible to impart or to get that Transcendental Divine Knowledge. Initiator Guru must have two qualifications as mentioned in Mundaka Sruti are (1) *Srotriyam* - Well-versed in Sruti sastras - the Vedas and other allied scriptures, another interpretation of Srotriyam is– blessed by the descent of the Divine knowledge through preceptorial channel and (2) *Brahma-Nistham* - must have realization of Divinity. Only academic or theoretical knowledge is not sufficient, he must have practical realization also.

After eight million births we have got this precious human birth, Supreme Lord is pleased by creating human beings because human beings have got the discriminating power between eternal and non-eternal, good deeds and bad deeds, they have got the capability to worship Lord. But other living beings have got no such conscience, discriminating power. So it is said 'Shubhasya shighram, ashubhasya kalaharanam' - when there will be good desire, we should do it immediately, otherwise later there might be some hindrance and obstacle to it and when there will be evil desire, you should make late to do it, you should not do it immediately - this is Ravana's advice to Lakshman. There is no guarantee that next we shall get human birth. It is stated in the Gita (8.6) -

yam yam vapi smaran bhavam tyajaty ante kalevaram
tam tam evaiti kaunteya sada tad-bhava-bhavitah

Whatever we shall think at the time of death, we shall get birth accordingly.

The votary should have firm faith in God - Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. Supreme Lord is One, He cannot be many. Even a particle cannot be outside Krishna. He is the only sustainer and maintainer. By serving Him we serve all. If we pour water at the root of the tree, all parts of the tree will be nourished, if we give food to the stomach, all parts of the body will be nourished, like that we should have firm faith - by serving Him we serve all. Without serving Him, Who is the Prime Cause of all causes, we can neither do any good to ourselves nor to others, but only the valuable time of precious human birth will be unnecessarily wasted. Krishna has stated in the Gita (9.24) - 'aham hi sarva-yajnanam bhokta ca prabhur eva ca' - I am the only Master and Enjoyer. Srila Rupa Goswami has stated in 'Sri Laghubhagvatamrita' -

Visnos tu trini rupani purushakhyany atho viduh
ekam tu mahatah srashtri dvitiyam tv anda-samsthitam
tritiyam sarva-bhuta-stham tani jnatva vimucyate

Here in this world we see male and female living beings, but actual Purush (male) is Supreme Lord and all living beings are the outcome of His energy (prakriti), tatastha sakti (marginal potency). When we see Supreme Lord as Purush (male) then we will be delivered from this maya, we shall have no desire to enjoy this world. The aspirant should associate with bona fide sadhu to get firm faith in God and worship God with different devotional forms to satisfy Him - mainly nine forms of devotion of which Nama-sankirtan is the best. We are to accept that which is congenial for His service and give up that which is prohibited viz. gambling, any kind of intoxication, illicit connection with women, eating meat, onion, garlic etc. which increase raja-guna and tama-guna such as onion, garlic etc. Harinam is medicine, remedy of the disease and food should be Prasad - so that which cannot be offered to God, we cannot take. This basis should be there before taking Harinam initiation. In addition, we should observe devotional vows viz. Ekadasi tithi, Janmashtami tithi, Advent Anniversary of Gauranga Mahaprabhu, Narasingha Chaturdasi, etc. We should wear Tulasi (holy basil) neck beads.

There are two kinds of Guru— (1) 'So-called guru' who initiates to get worldly benefits for himself and his disciples. A bona fide Guru does not think himself as Guru while giving mantra to disciples. Outwardly it is seen that somebody is giving mantra and instruction and some persons are taking mantra for worship of God. But actually a real Guru never makes disciples with the ego of being Guru. He always serves his object of worship. Krishna is highly satisfied if those conditioned souls who are averse to Him, accept rules and regulations to serve Him. This kind of showing the actual path of eternal welfare to the aspirants or votaries is the greatest service of Krishna. Outside person by seeing the ceremony may think that one is giving mantra as Guru and other is taking mantra as disciple. True eternal servant of Krishna, wherever they may stay, their ultimate goal is to serve Krishna and His devotees and not for any other ulterior motives. There is a gulf of difference between a bona fide Guru and a pseudo guru— one is serving Krishna, his target is to satiate Krishna and other's motive is to get mundane non-eternal benefit.

Those who give mantra with mundane ulterior motives are to suffer for the sinful acts of the disciples because they are not doing it for Supreme Lord's satisfaction. But the surrendered souls who are giving mantra as per direction of Guru and Gauranga for Their satisfaction, cannot get the fruits of the sinful actions of the so-called disciples. As God is Omniscient and controller of the fruits of actions, so nobody can deceive Him.

Conditioned souls who are entangled by illusory energy are unable to remove their non-eternal desires imbibed in their hearts after passing through numerous births. It is not possible for them to remove the previous bad impressions by their own efforts. But if they take shelter to the lotus feet of a bona fide Guru without deceitfulness, by Guru's grace their spiritual life will be successful. Even Krishna has given warning in the Gita (9.30),

api cet su-duracaro bhajate mam ananya-bhak
sadhur eva sa mantavyah samyag vyavasito hi sah'

A devotee who has taken absolute shelter to Supreme Lord Sri Krishna and does not stop worshipping Krishna steadfastly, in case does any abominable action due to the pressure of his previous bad impressions caused by bad actions, should not be condemned or censured for his evil deed, because he will have serious repentance for his bad actions, he will pray continuously to Lord to forgive him for the offence. This verse - this pithy saying of Krishna proves how

much love he has got for the neophyte votaries who want to worship Him sincerely from the core of their hearts. Lord has directed his personal associate Arjuna to declare with pledge in the whole universe to all other forms of worshippers, Karmi, Jnani, Yogi etc. and worshippers of all other demigods that His worshipper will never be ruined, instead he will become a great saint at the earliest and he will get eternal bliss. In this connection this is to be seriously noted that offence of a hypocrite will never be forgiven, because his prayer to the Lord is only an outward show, he cheats himself and cheats others. He does not want eternal welfare. A deceitful person is ever doomed.

It is already stated earlier, *'Shubhasya Shighram, ashubhasya kalaharanam'*. There is no guarantee that we shall get human birth after our present birth. Why one should take risk. Atleast if you do worship sincerely for some years in the company of Sadhus, the association will not go in vain. That good impression sometimes may not remain permanently - but the momentum of good ideas in the heart will come again with greater velocity. So it is better to start bhajan immediately rather than not doing anything. Take absolute shelter and pray to Nityananda Prabhu and Gauranga Mahaprabhu. They have come to rescue all and give the highest Krishna prema to all, without consideration. Utter their names and pray to Them. It is the nature of Supreme Lord to rescue the surrendered souls. He has said in the Gita (6.40),

'Na hi kalyana krit kascid durgatim tata gacchati' 'A sincere soul will never be deceived.'

Instructions of Guru are foremost

One day, Sriman Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was sitting with Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya and other devotees, while discussing the pastimes of Krishna. At that time Govinda came and offered his respectful obeisance's and said, "I am the servant of Sri Ishavara Puri. My name is Govinda. As per instructions of my

spiritual master, I have come here. Just before his departure from this material world, Sri Ishavara Puri asked me that I should go to Sriman Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and render service unto Him. Kashisvara will also come here after visiting all the holy places. However, following the orders of my spiritual master, I have hastily come here."

Sriman Chaitanya Mahaprabhu replied, "My spiritual master, Ishvara Puri, always favors Me with parental affection. Thus, out of his causeless mercy, he has sent you here." Then Sri Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya asked Sriman Mahaprabhu, "Why did Ishvara Puri keep a servant who come from a shudra family?" Srimand Mahaprabhu replied, "Supreme Personality of Godhead and My spiritual master, Ishavar Puri, both are completely independent. Thus, neither the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead nor the mercy of Ishvara Puri is subject to any Vedic rules and regulation. The mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is not restricted to the jurisdiction of caste and creed. Vidura was a shudra, still Krishna had lunch at his house. The mercy of Krishna is dependent only on affection. Being obliged by affection, Krishna acts independently. In conclusion, dealing in affection with the Supreme Personality of Godhead bring happiness many times more than dealings with Him in awe and veneration. Simply by hearing the holy name of the Lord, the devotee is merged in transcendental bliss."

Srimand Chaitanya Mahaprabhu then embraced Govinda, and Govinda in turn offered his respectful obeisance's unto Sriman Mahaprabhu Lotus Feet.

Then Sriman Mahaprabhu said to Sri Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, "Consider this point. The servant of the spiritual master is always respectable for Me. As such, it is not befitting that the guru's servant should engage in My personal service. Yet My spiritual master has given this order. What shall I do?"

Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya said, "The order of the spiritual master is very strong and cannot be disobeyed. That is the injunction of the scriptures. Being ordered by his father, Parashurama killed his mother, Renuka, as if she was an enemy. When Lakshmana, younger brother of Lord Rama, heard of this, He immediately engaged Himself in the service of His elder brother and accepted His orders. The order of the spiritual master must be obeyed without consideration. The order of a great personality like a father must be executed without consideration because there is a good fortune in such an order for both of us. In particular, there is good fortune for Me". After Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya said this, Sriman Mahaprabhu

embraced Govinda and engaged him in His own service.

Jagadish and Jagannath Deva

The following is an excerpt from the book "Sri Chaitanya: His Life and Associates".

Deep in the jungles of West Bengal, on the road from Calcutta to Mayapur, lies the tiny village of Jasra. A hidden jewel lies there, in the form of this beautiful deity of Lord Jagannath, Who originally lived in the Jagannath Temple in Puri, Orissa. Jasra is famous for the wonderful snan-yatra festival held there every year wherein thousands of villagers flock to the temple there, now in the care of the Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math. How the Lord of the Universe came to live in this tiny, out-of-the-way place is a wonderful story, narrated below by His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaj as it appears in the book, Sri Chaitanya: His Life and Associates. Here, Srila Tirtha Maharaj gives us a delightfully colourful account of Lord Jagannath's journey to Jasra and His pastimes in the area, including the history of the temple.

Before taking sannyas, Mahaprabhu ordered Jagadish to go to Nilachala to preach Krishna bhakti and the religious practice of the age, Harinam sankirtan. The son of Nanda, Sri Krishna and the son of Jagannath Mishra, Sri Gaurasundar, are the same supreme divinity as Jagannath. When Jagadish arrived in Puri, he went for Lord Jagannath's darshan and melted with love when he saw Him. On his way back to Bengal, however, he felt extreme separation from Jagannath. Thousands and thousands of people go on pilgrimage to Puri every single day. All of them take darshan of Jagannath, but how many of them are overcome by feelings of separation when returning home? Perhaps once in a while some fortunate individual is able to feel such emotions. If one truly feels such pangs of separation, then this is a sign of

Jagannath's mercy; if not, then one has not truly received the grace of the Lord.

Jagannath Deva saw Jagadish crying and mercifully appeared to him in a dream and told him to take His vigraha and serve it. Simultaneously, He appeared to the king of Orissa and ordered him that at the time of the nava-kalevara, when the wooden deity of Jagannath is renewed, the outgoing form should be given to Jagadish Pandit. As a result of this dream, the Maharaj considered it to be a great honor to give Jagadish Lord Jagannath's outgoing form, which is known as the samadhi-stha-vigraha.

Jagadish prayed to Jagannath, asking Him how he could possibly carry the deity's heavy body all the way back to Bengal. Jagannath answered that for his sake He would become as light as cork. Then Jagadish was to cover Him with a piece of new cloth and then carry Him suspended on the end of a staff. Jagannath further told him that he would have to make permanent arrangements to stay wherever He was set down on the ground. Jagadish enlisted the aid of two Brahmins and they took turns carrying Jagannath as far as the village of Jashora on the banks of the Ganges, near the town of Chakdaha. Jagadish left Jagannath with one of the Brahmins and went to take his bath in the Ganges and to perform oblations of Ganga water. While he was gone, the Brahmin found that Jagannath was suddenly becoming very heavy and that he was no longer able to hold Him up. When Jagadish came back from his bath, he saw Jagannath sitting on the ground and realized that the Lord wanted to stay in that very spot.

Chakdaha is a historical site and an ancient holy place. During the Puranic age, it was known as Rathavarma. Pradyumna killed the demon Sambara there during Krishna's incarnation at the end of the Dvapara age and thus it was known as Pradyumna-nagara. Prior to that, when Bhagiratha was bringing down the Ganga in order to save the Sagara dynasty, he buried the wheel of his chariot here. Thus the town was also given the name Chakradaha, which in time has been corrupted into Chakdaha. When the local people heard that the

Jagannath deity from Puri had come to stay in Jashora, they flocked there in the thousands to seek His darshan. This is how Jagadish decided to remain in Jashora rather than return to to his home in Mayapur.

Being attracted by Jagadish Pandit and his wife's parental devotion,

Nityananda Prabhu and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu both visited the Jagannath temple in Jashora on two different occasions. The two Prabhus held sankirtan and a feast both times. As the Lord was about to leave Jashora to go to Puri, Duhkhini began to cry from the imminent separation so intensely that the Lord agreed to remain behind in the form of the Gaura Gopal deity. In the course of the couple's householder life, they also had a son named Ramabhadra.

The Jashora temple after Jagadish Pandit

At first the deity was kept under a Bata tree near the Ganges, and later the king of Krishnagar, Krishna Chandra, had a temple built there for Him. When the temple became old and dilapidated, Umesh Chandra Majumdar's wife Mokshada Devi arranged for repairs to be made. The temple building has no spire, but has been constructed in the manner of an ordinary house. Along with Jagannath, it houses Sri Sri Radha Vallabha and Gaura Gopal. The staff that Jagadish Pandit used to carry the deity from Puri continues to be kept there. Devotees for the service of the Jagannath deity donated a large amount of land, but over the course of time, Jagadish Pandit's descendants sold it all off in order to keep the service of the deity alive. No Rathayatra festival is held here, though his Snana Yatra is celebrated with great pomp. On that occasion, the deity is carried from the temple to an altar built in a large field not far from the temple for the purpose of the bathing ritual. A mela or fair is also held in the field, attracting countless people. This Jashora Jagannath Snana Yatra fair is still very well known. There is also a 500 year-old dais (maïca) for Dola Yatra at the site that is used to swing Radha Vallabha on Phalguni purnima.

Siddha Bhagavan Das Babaji of Khalna stayed in Jashora for some time to do his bhajan. There is an annual festival celebrating Jagadish Pandit's disappearance day on the third day of the waxing moon (sukla trtiya) in the month of Paush (December-January). His appearance day is the twelfth day of the waxing moon (sukla dvadasi) in the same month.

Jagadish Pandit's temple is currently under the management of the Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math. How this came to pass was described in the Chaitanya Vani magazine (2.9) in the following way:

"The Supreme Lord is most affectionate to His devotees and is conquered by their love. How many different stratagems He engages in just to accept the

service of His devotee! Though served in Goloka by hundreds of thousands of goddesses of fortune, Govinda still seems to not have enough people to serve Him. It is as though He feels that the service is not being conducted as it should. How many tricks He plays in order to engage the devotee He wants in His service!

Just look at the ploy that Govardhan-dhari Gopal used to engage Madhavendra Puri. His previous pujari had buried Him in the jungle on top of Govardhan out of fear of Muslim marauders. Gopal waited there patiently until Puripada happened by. He said to him, "I have been waiting impatiently for you for many days, just wondering when Madhavendra will come to render Me service." The Lord plays His cosmic game and these are all different aspects of His pastime.

So now, the very same Jagannath and Gaura Gopal deities who were worshiped by Nityananda Prabhu's dear associate, Jagadish Pandit, have similarly displayed the wonderful pastime of voluntarily offering Themselves to the great devotee, Tridandi Swami Srimad Bhakti Dayita Madhava Maharaj, in order to accept his service."

Due to increasing monetary difficulties three of Jagadish Pandit's descendants, Vishvanath Goswami, Shambhunath Mukhopadhyaya and Mrityunjaya Mukhopadhyaya, had come to realize that they were no longer able to maintain the day-to-day service nor undertake the annual festivals of their ancestral deities. The condition of the temple buildings had also deteriorated and they were unable to make the necessary repairs. As a result, they decided to take the counsel of Sri Panchu Thakur of Jashora and Santosh Kumar Mallik of Ranaghat and eventually surrender the temple, without conditions, to my spiritual master, the founder and acharya of Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, Om 108 Sri Srimad Bhakti Dayita Madhava Goswami Maharaj. Guru Maharaj immediately spent a large sum of money on making the needed repairs and improvements to the temple, adding electric lighting and a new hostel building.

In the first year after taking over Jagannath's service, Guru Maharaj came to the annual festival and personally sat several thousand men and women in the neighboring field and fed them with maha prasad. I still feel goose bumps when I remember the ecstasy that flooded over Jashora on that day.

Jahnava Devi's Glory

Virabhadra Goswami was inundated with Jahnava Mata's mercy, becoming Her direct initiated disciple. Nityananda Das writes in his *Prema-Vilasa* that when Virabhadra saw Jahnava Devi in a four-armed form, His mind was changed and He decided to accept Her as His *diksha Guru.*

Without the mercy of Nityananda Prabhu's energy, Jahnava Devi, no one is able to cross over the ocean of material life, nor can one obtain the service of Nityananda Prabhu and enter into the loving service of His worshipable Gaurhari and Radha-Krishna.

Srila Bhakti Vinode Thakur has written in his *Kalyankalpatru*:

"O Jahnava Devi! Be merciful today to your servant and deliver me from my pain. Give me a place in the boat of your lotus feet so that I can be sure to cross over the ocean of birth and death. You are Nityananda's energy. You are devotion to Krishna and my guru. Please give this servant the desire tree of your lotus feet. How numerous are the fallen souls that you have saved? So this fallen beggar seeks a place at your feet."

Srila Krishna Das in his song that begins as *Jaya Radhe Jaya Krishna Jaya Vrindavana,* has prayed for Jahnava Devi's mercy after glorifying Krishna's name, abode and associates: "Remembering Jahnava Devi's lotus feet, the lowly Krishna Das sings the name of the Lord". On 11 May 08.

Jayadeva Write Gita-Govinda

On the disappearance day of Srila Jayadev Goswami (13 Jan 2004), The following is an excerpt from the book "Sri Chaitanya: His Life and Associates" by Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj.

Jayadeva established the worship of a Narayan deity and in the waves of love which he felt for this deity, he began writing Gita-Govinda, with its incomparable ambrosia. It is said that though Jayadeva is responsible for all the moods and sentiments which appear in the Gita- Govinda, he had some reticence about writing that Krishna fell down at Radharani's feet to beg her forgiveness when she was angry with him for having deceived her.

On that day, when he left the house to take his bath in the ocean, Lord Jagannath himself came in, disguised as Jayadeva, opened his manuscript and completed the verse he had started smara-garala-khandanam mama sirasi mandanam with the words dehi pada-pallavam udaram: "Place the noble sprout of your foot as an ornament on my head, it dispels the poison of love in separation." (GG 10.8)

Padmavati was surprised to see her husband back so soon from his bath and asked, "What are you doing here? You just left a minute ago." The disguised Jagannath answered, "I thought of something on my way. I was afraid I might forget so I came back to write it down."

Not long after Jagannath had left, the real Jayadeva returned. This time, Padmavati was really astonished to see him. She said, "You just left to go and take your bath. Just a few moments ago you were writing in your manuscript and then you left. How could you have finished and come back so quickly? I am beginning to wonder who that was and who you are?" Jayadeva was clever enough to guess what had happened and he went and looked at his unfinished text and saw the words that the Lord himself had written. His entire body was covered with horripilation and tears came pouring from his eyes. He called Padmavati and said to her, "You are so fortunate. Your life has been made worthy. You have had the good fortune to see the Lord himself. I am so lowly that I did not have that opportunity!"

Jagannath's love for Gita-Govinda

There is a legend told in Jagannath Puri that there was a flower gardener's daughter who had learned Gita-Govinda and would sing it with great emotion. Jagannath was attracted by her singing and would go to listen to her, only returning to the temple after she had finished singing.

One day, when the king of Orissa came to see the deity, he saw that the Lord's body was covered in dust and his clothes were filled with thorns. He asked the pujaris the reason for the Lord's disheveled condition, but no one could explain how it had come about. The servants of the deity were afraid that they would be punished, but that night, Jagannath appeared to the king in a dream and explained that no one was to blame for his soiled condition that day. He had gone to listen to the gardener's daughter and that the dust and thorns had covered him when in the garden.

The king was astonished to have received such information in a dream and he immediately sent for the gardener's daughter to be brought to the court in a palanquin. After making inquiries from her, he decided that she should sing for Jagannath in the temple, rather than obliging the Lord to leave the temple and get all dirty. Ever since that time, girls named deva-dasis have been engaged by the temple to sing Gita-Govinda for Jagannath's pleasure.

Many other amazing and miraculous events surrounded the life of Jayadeva. He used to serve his deities Radha and Madhava in a trance of divine love. It is said that just as the devotee dedicates himself to the Lord, the Lord also dedicates himself to his devotee. One day, Jayadeva was thatch his roof under the unforgiving midday sun. Jagannath saw the discomfort of his devotee and decided to help him finish the work quickly by handing him the rope needed to bale the straw and removing the finished bundles and placing them on the roof. Jayadeva thought that it was Padmavati who was helping him in this way. But when he came down from the roof after finishing much earlier than expected, he saw no one there. He asked his wife and she told him that she had been busy elsewhere at the time. He was curious about what had happened, but struck with wonder when he went into the deity room and saw that Madhava's hands were black from handling the straw. He was thus able to understand that it was Madhava himself who had come to help him thatch the roof. He fell

down before his Lord and started to cry.

In the last twelve years of Mahaprabhu's lila, he was absorbed in Radha's mood and constantly relishing this hidden spirit of love. During this time, he would savor the songs of the Gita-Govinda.

Svarupa Damodar would sing songs that reflected the moods of the Lord whenever they arose, while Ramananda Raya selected verses from Vidyapati, Chandi Das and Gita- Govinda.

Day and night, Mahaprabhu ecstatically relished the songs of Chandi Das, Vidyapati and Ramananda Raya's plays, as well as Krishna-karnameta and Gita-Govinda in the company of Svarupa and Ramananda. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.2.77)

Jayadeva goes to Vrindavan

After this, Jayadeva wanted to see Vrindavan. He took leave of the king and queen and then, taking his deities, Radha and Madhava with him, set off on the long journey. Once in Vrindavan, he began to serve his deities in a spot near Keshi Ghat. When they heard Jayadeva sing the Gita-Govinda in his sweet voice, the residents of the dham were entranced. One merchant built a large temple for the deities on that spot.

It is said that Jayadeva lived in Vrindavan for many years and then returned to his birthplace in Kendubilva. Each day, he would make the long walk to the Ganges to take his bath there. One day, for some reason or another, he was unable to make it. Ganga Devi was so kind to him that she came personally to the village of Kendubilva so that he could take his bath in her waters. It is said that he died there in Kendubilva and every year a large festival is held there in his memory on the first day of the month of Magh.

There is a difference of opinions about where Jayadeva finished his life. Some say Puri, while others say that he returned to Kendubilva, and others say that he went to Vrindavan. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur has stated his opinion that Jayadeva died in Jagannath Puri. Though some people say that Jayadeva returned to Kendubilva to spend his last days, there is no indication anywhere that his Radha-Madhava deities were brought there. In fact, these deities were taken by the king of Jaipur to a place named Ghati sometime after Jayadeva's death and they are still being served in the

Jaipur area.
Jayadeva’s disappearance day is on the sixth day of the waning moon of the month of Paush.

Jhulan Yatra - The Swing Festival

Traditionally, in the Jhulan Yatra (swinging festival), conditioned souls – ordinary aspirants are not entitled to enter. Yet, our guruvarga has introduced this. This is a type of worship of Supreme Lord.

Radha Krishna are object of all love. Now we are actually worshipping Lakshmi Narayana, not Radha Krishna. (Where there is wealth, love is restricted.) We are not entitled to worship Radha Krishna as we have not reached that stage, which is the completely sweet aspect.

In swinging festival, only gopis are allowed. gopis’ love is the highest level of love that one cannot imagine. How gopis are completely attached with Krishna is beyond our imagination! In swinging festival, only Radha Krishna and the gopis are there. Even Nanda Maharaj, Yashoda Devi, other friends and servants are not allowed.

In Krishna leela, sakhas (friends) are boon companions. Sakhya rasa – friendship relation is there in Vaikuntha also with Narayan, but with awe and fear. With boon companions there is no such restriction. They even climb upon the shoulders of Krishna. (What is this bhakti! They climb upon the object of worship? Yes, it is Bhakti.) They say, “Oh, Krishna you are our friend and we are equal to you. But you have got some power, you are very healthy. So you should remain on the ground and we shall climb upon your shoulders and get you the fruit from the tree.” This way they go up, up, up, up (climbing one upon another’s shoulder) and Krishna is standing on the ground. They pluck one fruit for Krishna's sake. They taste whether it is sweet, bitter, or sour. “Aah, it’s very sweet! Give it to Krishna” and passes on to the next one. Next one also wants to taste whether it is true or false, “Let me taste.” In this way four or five friends

taste the fruit and then give it to Krishna, Who will take it with so much satisfaction.

How can you understand that (transcendental) world and this sort of prem? Yet, even the sakhas are not allowed there in this swinging ceremony. And Nanda Maharaj’s prem is further more affection for Krishna than friends and they also have no entrance.

In Bhakti Ratnakar, a Bengali scripture written by Narahari Chakravarthi, it is written that Jhulan Yatra is performed in Kamyavan, one of the 12 forests in Braj Mandal. One Goswami of South India performed Bhajan in Govardhan. At that time he had shown all the places of pastimes of Radha Krishna to Srinivas Acharya and Narottam Thakur. When he came to Kamyavan he had shown them nice groves of kadamba trees, where Radha Krishna and all the sakhis and confidants get immersed in immensely blissful transcendental pastimes. They performed several pastimes there. One of the pastimes is Swinging festival. It occurs in the month of Shravan. It starts from Ekadashi (11th lunar day) to full moon day for 4 to 5 days.

Here they did Jhulan (Swinging) festival in the month of Shravan, but Jhulan in Radhakund is performed daily by the gopis. We remember this swinging festival, daily in Kartik festival during the midday pastime of Radha Krisna. It’s called Dola Khela.

We can do this worship for 5 days as per Archan marg. So our guruvarga said you can do it through sankirtan, by praying for grace, for entering into the transcendental realm. But as long as there is material ego there is no possibility. But we should not be disappointed. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said, “Namasankirtan karo parama upaya. I have given Radha Krishna Sankiratna - Mahamantra. Everything is in the Name. Do it without tenfold offenses.” By doing Radha Krishna mantra gradually one will transcend Vidhi marga and go into Raga marga. Do Harinam and associate with pure devotees and hear from them. It will come gradually. You cannot jump into it.

First we have to chant the Name, then when our mind will be clear, Form will be revealed in the heart. In mantra there is Form. This form will manifest. As you continue Harinam, all other subtler attributes will manifest. Finer than this are personal associates in their spiritual eternal bodies, then Krishna's spiritual eternal body, Radharani's spiritual eternal body, and the gopis’ eternal spiritual

bodies will manifest.

In this kaliyuga you have to give primary importance to Harinam. You can do other devotional forms but with simplicity. Without spoiling your time, go on doing Harinam with firm faith and your life will be successful.

--- *Excerpt from a lecture delivered by Srila Gurudev in Kolkata Math on August 29, 2004.*

Killing of Pralambasura

Sri Krishna and Balarama's wandering place of Vraja-dhama was decorated with all the pleasing qualities of spring even during the summer season. One day, Krishna and Balarama, along with their friends, were engaged in playing, dancing and singing when Pralambasura entered their midst disguised as a cowherd boy. The cowherd boy friends were unable to understand this, but omniscient Lord Krishna understood that the newcomer cowherd was a demon in disguise. In order to kill him, He received him as a friend. All the cowherd boys then divided into two parties for a game. Krishna became the leader of one group and Balarama became the leader of the other. The condition of the game was that the party that was defeated would carry the victor on his shoulder. When they played, Sridama and Vrishabha of Balarama's party became victorious. Consequently, Krishna carried Sridama and Bhadrasena carried Vrishabha. On the other side, Balarama defeated Pralambasura. Avoiding Krishna, Pralambasura ran away carrying Balarama stealthily on his shoulders.

Balarama, understanding the ill motives of the demon, became so heavy on the shoulders of Pralambasura that he was unable to bear His weight. The demon then assumed his real form. Upon seeing the terrible form of the demon, Haladhara Baldeva at first expressed symptoms of doubt. But just as Indra hurled his lightning bolt, shattering mountains to slay the demons, Baldeva

struck the demon a ferocious blow on the head with His fist. This blow shattered Pralambasura's head and he began to vomit blood. The cowherd boys and demigods then began to glorify Lord Baladeva profusely due to the excellence of His deed.

Srila Bhakti Vinode Thakur describes the purport of killing of Pralambasura as follows: "Pralambasura is a symbol of illicit sexual connection (stri-lampatya), aspiration for gain, adoration (labha-puja) and name and fame (pratishtha). On 15 Aug 08.

Krishna Purushottama, The Extra Month

Purushottama, the holy month, occurs once every three years. This time, it began on July 17 and will culminate on August 16, a period believed to be the most favourable for spiritual uplift. Devotional practice during the month is said to bring to offenders the chance to be forgiven.

According to the Indian Almanac, every three years, an extra month, Purushottama, is included in the year in order to harmonise the lunar month with the solar month. It is technically called an 'intercalary month'. According to the Smarta school of thought this month is unholy, as they refer to it as being 'tarnished'. Prescribing various holy functions for all months of the year, they left this additional 'unholy' month out of their plans.

However, the Vaishnava school of thought objects to this, arguing that not a single moment is to be spent without the worship of the Supreme Lord during Purushottama. The god who is associated with the holiest of all months is Sri Purushottama, who is none other than Sri Krishna, since His favourite month is this.

In the Gita, Krishna says: "I am celebrated both in the world and in the Vedas as that Supreme person: Purushottama" (15.18). The Lord of the Universe, Jagannath, is also known as Purushottama. His abode, Puri, is known as Purushottama-Dhama.

The best spiritual practice during the month, according to the Srimad Bhagavatam, is to hear the glories of the Supreme Lord, the Hari Katha. This time the month of Purushottama has come in the Shravana season. Krishna said: "This additional month is like Me. I cannot be comprehended by the conditioned souls of this world — I am Supreme, and so I am designated as Purushottama."

Everything in our spiritual culture has got consciousness (in the background) — the Sun is presided over by the Sun-god, the moon is presided over by the Moon-god and Ganga Devi is the presiding deity of the river Ganga. Similarly, there is a presiding deity for the Purushottama month.

Depressed because of her seemingly useless existence, this deity approached Lord Narayana and asked Him: "What offence did I commit? Why is that no one performs any pious activities during my time?" Narayana directed her to Krishna who said: "I am Purushottama and I cannot be comprehended by finite beings of this world... as I am beyond their means of comprehension."

Krishna explained: "This additional month is like Me. You (Purushottama) are Me. You are the holiest month. If anybody observes vrata (vow of austerity) during your time, he can get everything. If the austerities are observed according to scriptural injunctions, it is even more auspicious than Kartik vrata, the holiest of months. So you will be known by the name Purushottama."

During the holy month of Purushottama, certain spiritual practices are observed by devotees: Recitation of Sri Jagannathastakam in the mornings, of Chauragraganya Purusashtakam in the afternoons, performance of japam or chanting as instructed by Kaundinya Muni, Deep daana or ghee-lamp offerings in the evenings at the Vishnu, Krishna or Ram mandir, and last but not the least, reading the Brahmastava, 40 slokas in Sanskrit, from the Bhagavatam, chapter 14, Canto 10. This spiritual technique, when performed with devotion in

Purushottama, can bestow manifold results on the sadhak. Observance of Purushottama vrata brings eternal joy to the soul.

Krsna: the Greatest Magician

Many people have asked about this photograph. It was taken by Bindu Madhava das of France, Monday 16 August 1999, during the time that Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaj and His entourage were in Phoenix, Arizona. A rather unusual program had been arranged for that particular evening at a place called the "Mountain Temple Center" which actually was the home of a local magician named Michael Crowley (a descendent of Alistair Crowley). Michael is a very humble and deferential person and he was extremely desirous of having Maharaj come speak at the Center. The Center sits atop a small mountain in the middle of a mountain preserve that runs right through the center of north Phoenix. Due to the small size of the house, it had been decided that the program be held outside. There, Michael had constructed a stone circle, like a miniature Stonehenge. The program was to take place inside this circle.

Earlier that day, Maharaj inquired as to the nature of the program that evening. When He heard that the program was to be at the home of a magician, Gurudeva said, "Ah-ho!" and proceeded to relate lovely esoteric stories of His boyhood encounters with village yogis. He told one tale of the time that He and some of the village boys had tried to come near one of these yogis. This particular yogi was so powerful, however, that he had constructed a barrier of heat around himself so that no one could come near and disturb him. The boys ran and fled from that place. After telling these stories, Maharaj remained alone as He constructed the lecture for that evening in His mind.

Phoenix is a desert valley, but it sits at the foot of the Rocky Mountains and, as such, there are summer monsoon rains. That evening, the clouds were building and building up, darker and darker, and a storm looked imminent. The program started near sunset, at which time Maharaj asked, as He always does, who was the host of the program. Michael was introduced to Him and Maharaj said that

He had heard that he was a magician. Michael confirmed that he was.

"Well, what is magic?" Maharaj began, and He launched into several amusing personal anecdotes about magic and magicians. He also gave some humorous examples citing modern technology and media as a form of magic. In this short space we will not go into the contents of these stories, but He ended the stories by saying... "These are examples of man's magic....and what are these displays of magic?.... they are illusion....."

"But, who is the greatest magician?" He asked mysteriously.

On the mountain, the wind starts to blow... On the video of the event, Maharaj's chadar can be seen flapping in the strong winds. The clouds start getting thicker.

"Supreme Lord Sri Krsna is the greatest magician...."

Now, there is lightning in the sky and thunder resounding throughout the valley. Things start falling over on the altar that Michael had constructed. All this is visible and audible on the video tape...even the video camera itself becomes unsteady due to wind and has to be held tightly.

"This is Krsna's magic," Maharaj says, pointing to the storm clouds and lightning.

To demonstrate how Krsna is the greatest magician, Srila Gurudeva told narrated the wonderful story of Markedeya Rsi. Afterwards, He told the story that was the highlight of the evening, a very lengthy and beautiful rendering of the story wherein Narada Muni asks Sri Krsna if he can see His Maya potency.

Maharaj explained that, so long as Narada Muni remembered Krsna, there could be no possibility of Krsna showing him His Maya but, to demonstrate His Maya as per Narada's request, Krsna arranged a very complicated scenario. Catching Narada Muni off guard, Krsna bids Narada to bathe in a beautiful lake. Narada submerges himself and when he resurfaces, Krsna has disappeared. Narada, himself, has been transformed into a woman. "She" cannot remember Krsna. She cannot even remember who she, herself, is. The woman finds herself drowning in a sea of rocky waves. "Who will rescue me?! Who will rescue me?!" she cries. A king comes along and saves her. He is immediately captivated by her beauty. Ultimately, Narada as a woman takes shelter of this king and his kingdom. He

marries her and they have 50 sons. She is so attached to her husband, her sons and her role as queen that she has no time to go to the temple or perform bhajan. Over time, the sons marry and, due to internal jealousies among the wives of the sons, war breaks out among the sons over land disputes. Eventually, all the sons are killed.

Back in Phoenix, lightning is filling the sky. It is like a natural light-show running behind the lecture. Thunder is echoing louder throughout the mountains and the wind is gaining strength. The devotees are fearful that, at any moment, they will be caught in a deluge that is typical of a desert monsoon that time of year. A few devotees are standing in the back of the meeting, planning how to pack everything quickly and keep Gurudeva dry in case the need to escape in a hurry should arise.

Narada as the queen is devastated. She is suicidal over the loss of her sons. Krsna comes to her in the form of a brahmin. She does not recognize Him, but only sees a brahmin. She cries to Him that the Supreme Lord must be very stupid. "He is a dunderhead!" Maharaj quotes. If He takes away everyone's sons in this fashion, then creation will cease because who will want to have children just to suffer this pain? Krsna as the brahmin requests the queen to perform some ablutions at the lake so that she might gain some peace of mind. After some persuasion, she goes to the lake. As she picks her head up from the waters, "she" is now "he" once again, and Narada sees Krsna standing on the bank of the lake.

The moment Narada sees Krsna, he remembers who Krsna is, who he himself is and also all that had just transpired. With some amount of embarrassment, he relates to the Lord all that he had experienced.

"So," Krsna says, "That is my Maya! As soon as you forget Me, Maya comes. If you remember Me, Maya cannot come. Do you want to see it again?"

"Oh no! No!" Narada replies emphatically. "Please, I do not want to see it again."

Maharaj concludes... "So long as we remember Krsna, Maya cannot come. The moment we forget Krsna, Maya comes."

"So... you see," Maharaj explains, "Krsna is the greatest magician. All this," Maharaj says as He points to the sky and the mountains all around us, "this is

illusion.... Krsna's illusion... not man-made illusion."

Then He turns to our host and playfully asks him, "Can you do this?"

Michael laughs and humbly admits he cannot.

The wind has started to subside and the thunder has grown fainter. The lightning is no longer visible. The storm, the devotees thought, had passed them over.

After escorting Maharaj to the car, the devotees distributed prasad to the guests and spoke with them for a few minutes as they packed things up and prepared to leave.

As they descended the mountain driving in the car, however, they were amazed. To their great surprise, the ground at the foot of the mountain and all the surrounding areas had been drenched with rain. Only the little spot on top of the mountain had been spared the inundation. This is absolutely true and all the devotees witnessed it. The skeptic would say that this is coincidence, but if the Supreme Lord Sri Krsna, Lord of all lords, can sustain all the universes with a fraction of His "magic," then how difficult is it to withhold the rain from pouring on the head of His Most Beloved Associate, the Pure Devotee?

When we see this picture, we should always remember how fortunate we all are to have had the grace of Srila Gurudeva, and of all our respective Gurudevas, just to have seen Them and heard Them. That this is our great good fortune, within this world of Krsna's illusion, is certainly the greatest magic of all.

Lord Balrama

In his explanation of Sri Govind-tattva, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Prabhupada identifies Sri Baldeva as vaibhava-rupa (pastime form) of Lord Govinda. ‘Gah vindati iti govindah’ the word ‘go’ has several meanings including knowledge, senses, earth, cow and others. Sri Govinda manifests in

five forms:
svarupa or svayam-rupa: the original form. para-svarupa: the Narayana form. vaibhava-rupa: the pastime form. antaryami-rupa: the Indwelling Supersoul. arca-rupa: the Deity form. The svarupa or svayam-rupa, Vrajendranandana Govinda is the Cause of all causes.

isvarah paramah krisnah sac-cid-ananda-vigrahah anadir adir govindah sarva-karna-karanam (Brahma-samhita 5.1)
The para-svarupa or para-tattva-svarupa is understood to be Sri Visnu-Narayana, the Lord of the paravyoma (the transcendental spiritual sky) and Vaikuntha.

Sri Baldeva Prabhu, the original Narayan, is the vaibhava-prakasa of Govinda. He is the original cause of all emanations. The propagating prime cause of individuality or the all-pervading function-holder of the Personal Godhead is also Baladeva – He is svayam-prakasa. Sri Baladeva's color is white, different from that of Krisna. He carries a buffalo horn, which produces a louder sound than the flute of Krisna. Therefore He is known as Singadhrik (horn-holder). Sri Baladeva possesses qualities like Krisna. He is the fountainhead or prime source of the all-embracing, all-pervading and all-extending energy. The actual meaning of these definitions cannot be understood completely by using limited mundane terminology. Vibhu and Prabhu are interdependent. The one who is manifested as vaibhava-prakasa is Vibhu (the opulent manifested form), and the Divinity from whom He is manifested is Prabhu. There exists inconceivable non-distinction and distinction between Vibhu and Prabhu. Prabhu is Vasudeva and Vibhu is Sankarsana. Vibhu and Prabhu's oneness aspect the third manifestation, is Pradyumna. Similarly, Their fourth manifestation is in the form of Aniruddha. These four constitute the original catur-vyuha in Dvaraka and are the origin of all other catur-vyuhas. Their second manifestation is the second catur-vyuha in the paravyoma or Vaikuntha. They are also pure and turiya (transecendental) like the original catur-vyuha. Baladeva, who is Sri Krisna's vilasa form, is the Original Sankarsana. In the parvyoma or spiritual sky, Maha-Sankarasan is the svarupa-amsa Balarama's own amsa-avatara. He is the source of the first purusa-avatara, Karanarnavasayi Maha-Visnu. He (Baladeva or His manifestation, Karanarnavasayi Maha-Visnu) is the cause of Rama, Nrisimha and other avataras, as well as Goloka and Vaikuntha, and is also the cause of cosmos. All of the mentioned five forms of Visnu are of the same nature. Any number of lamps can be lit from the original lamp, and they will be capable of burning all things. Similarly, the original lamp is svayam-rupa Sri Krisna and there is no difference in tattva (essence) ontologically between the second, third, fourth and

fifth Visnu Deity or between one form and another of Visnu. There is only difference in the characteristics of Their pastimes. (The explanation of ‘Sri Govinda’ The compilation of lectures of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Prabhupada: 2nd Vol.)

Srila Krisnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami, while introducing the avataras of avatari (the fountainhead of avataras) Sri Krisna, writes in the 20th chapter of Madhya-lila of Sri Caitanya caritamrita as follows: Sri Krisna’s three different forms are:

svayam-rupa: the original form tadekatma-rupa: the same form, non-different from svayam-rupa but with different bodily features and specific activities

avesa-rupa: an empowered form Again, svayam-rupa is of two types:

svayam-rupa svayam-prakasa ‘svayamrupe-eka krisna vraje gopamurti’

Again, svayam-prakasa is of two types:

prabhava vaibhava sei vapu, sei akriti prithak yadi bhase
bhavavesa-bhede nama ‘vaibhava-prakase’
(Caitanya-caritamrita, Madhya 20.171)

"If one form or feature is differently manifested according to a different modes of features, it is called ‘vaibhav-prakasa’."

vaibhava-prakasa krisnera sri-balarama
varna-matra-bheda, saba-krisnera samana
(Caitanya-caritamrita, Madhya 20.174)

"The first manifestation of the vaibhava feature of Krisna is Sri Balarama. Sri Balarama and Krisna have different complexions, otherwise Sri Balarama is equal to Krisna in all respects."

In the 5th chapter of the Adi-lila of Sri Caitanya-caritamrita, Nityananda-tattva is

explained as follows:

sarva-avatari krisna svayam bhagvan
tanhara dvitiya deha sri-balarama
eka-i svarupa donhe, bhinna-matra kaya
adya kaya-vyuha, krisna-lilara sahaya
sei krisna-navadvipe sri-caitanya-candra
sei balarama-sange sri-nityananda
(Caitanya-caritamrita, Adi 5.4-6)

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krisna, is the fountainhead of all avataras. Lord Balarama is His second form. These two are one and the same identity. They differ only in form. Lord Balarama is the first expansion of Krisna and He assists in Lord Krisna’s transcendental pastimes. That original Lord Krisna appears in Navadvipa as Lord Caitanya, and Balarama appears with Him as Lord Nityananda."

Sri Balarama, who is the Deity of the sandhini potency, serves Krisna in His five forms of Maha-Sankarsana, Karanodakasayi, Garbhodakasayi, Ksirodakasayi, and Sesa.

Lord Chaitanya and serpent Kaliya

When at Vrindavan, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu would sit in a solitary place to chant the holy name until noon. In the afternoon people were able to speak to Him. The Lord would tell everyone the importance of chanting of the holy name. At that time, Krishnadas, a Vaishnava came to see Mahaprabhu. He was Kshatriya and a householder. After taking a dip at Kesi-tirtha, while going towards Kaliya-daha, he saw Mahaprabhu sitting at Amlitala. He was astonished by Lord's personal beauty and out of ecstatic love he offered his respectful

obeisances to the Lord. Mahaprabhu asked him, " Who are you? Where is your house?" He replied, 'I am a most fallen householder. I belong to Rajputa caste and my house is on the other side of Yamuna. However I wish to serve the Vaishnava. Today I had a dream and according to that dream I have come here and found You.'

Mahaprabhu bestowed His mercy upon him by embracing him. Krishnadas turned mad with ecstatic love and began to dance and chant the holy name of Lord. Krishnadas then returned to Akrura-tirtha with the Lord and received the remnants of Lord's food. The next morning Krishnadas went with Mahaprabhu to Vrindavan and carried His water pot. Krishnadas thus left his wife, home and children in order to remain with Sri Mahaprabhu.

Wherever the Lord went, all people quoted that Krishna has again manifested at Vrindavan. One morning many came to Akrura-tirtha. As they came from Vrindavan, they made a tumultuous sound. They offered their respects to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Mahprabhu asked them that from where they all were coming?

The people replied, "Krishna has again manifested Himself on the waters of Kaliya Lake. He dances on the hoods of the serpent Kaliya, and the jewels on those hoods are blazing. Everyone has see Lord Krishna Himself. There is no doubt about." Hearing this, Sri Mahaprabhu began to laugh and said, 'Everything is correct.'

For three successive nights people went to Kaliya-daha to see Krishna and everyone returned and said, 'Now we have seen Krishna Himself.' Everyone would come before Mahaprabhu and say, ' Now we have directly seen Lord Krishna'. Thus by mercy of goddess Sarasvati they were speaking truth. When people saw Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, they actually saw Krishna, but because they were following their own imperfect knowledge, they accepted the wrong thing as Krishna.

At that time Balabhadra Bhattacharya requested Sri Mahaprabhu, 'Please give me permission to go and see Lord Krishna directly.'

Sri Mahaprabhu mercifully slapped him and said, 'you are a learned scholar, but you have become a fool, influenced by the statements of other fools. Why would Krishna appear in the age of Kali? Foolish people who are mistaken are simply

causing agitation and creating chaos. Do not become mad. Sit here and tomorrow night you will go and see Krishna.'

The next morning some respectable gentlemen came to see Sriman Mahaprabhu and the Lord asked them, "Have you seen Krishna?"

They replied, "At night in Kaliya Lake a fisherman lights a torch in his boat and catches many fish. From distance, people mistakenly think that they are seeing Krishna dancing on the body of the Kaliya serpent. These fools think that the boat is the Kaliya serpent and the torchlight the jewels on his hoods. People also mistake the fisherman for Krishna. Actually Lord Krishna has returned to Vrindavan. That is truth, and it is also true that people have seen Him. But where they are seeing Krishna is their mistake. It is like considering a dry tree to be a person."

Sriman Mahaprabhu then asked them, "Where have you seen Krishna directly?" They replied, 'You are a sannyasi; therefore You are a moving Narayana. You have appeared in Vrindavan as an incarnation of Krishna. Just by seeing You, everyone is now liberated'.

Sriman Chaitanya Mahaprabhu immediately exclaimed, "Vishnu! Vishnu! Do not call Me the Supreme. A jiva cannot become Krishna at any time. Do not even say such a thing! A living entity and the Absolute are never to be considered equal, just as a fragmental spark can never be considered the original flame. The Supreme Controller is always full of transcendental bliss and is accompanied by potencies hladini and samvit. The conditioned soul is always covered by ignorance and embarrassed by the threefold miseries of life. Thus he is a treasure house of all kinds of tribulations. A foolish person who says that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the same as the living entity is an atheist, and he becomes subject to punishment by the superintendent of death, Yamaraja. A person who considers demigods like Brahma and Siva to be on an equal level with Narayana is to be considered an offender."

After listening to Sriman Mahaprabhu, the people said, "No one considers You an ordinary human being. You are like Krishna in every respect, in both bodily features and characteristics. By Your bodily features we can see that You are none other than the son of Nand Maharaj, although the golden luster of Your body has covered Your original complexion. As wrapping it in a cloth cannot conceal the aroma of deer musk, Your characteristics as The Supreme Absolute

cannot be concealed by any means. Your characteristics are uncommon and beyond imagination of an ordinary living being. By seeing You, the entire universe becomes mad with ecstatic love for Krishna. If they see You just once, even women, children, old men, meat eaters and members of the lowest caste immediately chant the holy name of Krishna, dance like madmen and become spiritual masters capable of delivering the whole world. Apart from seeing You, whoever listen to Your holy name turns mad with ecstatic love for Krishna and is able to deliver the three worlds. BY hearing Your holy name, dog-eaters become holy saints. Your uncommon potencies cannot be described in words. These glories of Yours are only marginal. Originally You are the son of Nand Maharaj"

Sriman Mahaprabhu then bestowed His causeless mercy upon all of them and everyone turned ecstatic with love of Godhead. Finally they all returned to their homes. (From CC, Madhya Ch: 18)

Loss of true science

The synonym of the English word 'logic' of the West is 'Tarkashastra' or 'Yuktividya', in India. They have ascertained two methods of attaining knowledge, which have their basis of reasoning: the inductive method and deductive method. Whatever finite human beings with finite intellect may ascertain, whether inductive or deductive, is actually in the domain of the process of ascension, which in India is called Avarohavaada. Induction refers to inferring of general law from particular instances, while deducting refers to inferring of particular instance from general law. In his book Raja Vidya, His Divine Grace Tridandi Swami Srimad Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj is writing, 'There are two processes for attaining knowledge: one is inductive and the other is deductive. The deductive method is considered to be more perfect. We may take a premise such as, " All men are mortal," and no one need discuss how man is mortal. It is generally accepted that this is the case. The deductive conclusion is: "Mr. Johnson is a man; therefore Mr. Johnson is mortal." But how is the premise that all men are mortal arrived at? Followers of the inductive method wish to arrive at this premise through experiment and observations. We may thus

study that this man died and that man died, etc, and after seeing that so many men have died we may conclude or generalize that all men are mortal, but there is a major defect in this inductive method, and that is that our experience is limited. We may never have seen a man who is not mortal, but we are judging this on our personal experience, which is finite. Our senses have limited power, and there are so many defects in our conditioned state. The inductive process consequently is not always perfect, whereas the deductive process from a source of perfect knowledge is perfect. The Vedic process is such a process'.

In India, there are disciplic successions coming from Ramanujacharya, Madhvacharya, Nimbarka, Vishnuswami and other great sages. The Vedic literatures are understood through the superior spiritual masters. Arjuna understood the Bhagwad Gita from Lord Krishna, and if we wish to understand it, we have to understand from Arjuna, not from any other source. If we have any knowledge of Bhagwad-Gita, we have to see how it tallies with the understanding of Arjuna. If we understand Bhagwad-Gita in the same way that Arjuna did, we should know that our understanding is correct. This should be the criterion of our studying of the Bhagwad-Gita. If we actually want to receive the benefit from Bhagwad-Gita, we have to follow this principle. The Bhagwad-Gita is not an ordinary book of knowledge that we can purchase from the market place, read and merely consult a dictionary to understand. This is not possible. If it were, Krishna would never have told Arjuna that the science was lost. It is not difficult to understand the necessity of going through the disciplic succession to understand Bhagwad-Gita. If we wish to be a lawyer, an engineer or doctor, we have to receive the knowledge from the authoritative lawyers, engineers and doctors. A new lawyer has to become an apprentice of an experienced lawyer, or a young man studying to be a doctor has to become an intern and work with those who are already licensed practioners. Our knowledge of a subject cannot be perfectionalized unless we receive it through authoritative sources. This has been acknowledged in the Bhagwad Gita.

In Sreemad Bhagwatam, Lord Vamana said to Shukracharya, (the spiritual master of demons): "Your disciple Bali Maharaj is in difficulty, it will be befitting for you to perform Yajna for his benefit". Shukracharya smiled and replied, "My disciple has seen you and you have graced him by setting your Holy Lotus Feet on his head. He has performed 'Anusankirtana', meaning that he has recapitulated about your Name, Form, Attributes, Pastimes, after hearing about these from a bonafide pure devotee. Where is the necessity of performing Karmakanda Yajna? By utterance of your Holy name and glories, all defects in

the utterance of mantra and tantra (inversion of sequence) and sinister influence of place, time and articles are removed." Anusankirtana means recapitulation of the glories of Supreme Lord, heard through a bonafide preceptorial channel. Here also a condition is imposed, that the hearing should be in from a bonafide devotee, not from a professional singer.

In order to establish how to sing the glories of Supreme Lord Sree Krishna and how to perform Harinama without offence, it is necessary to remember the teachings of the authentic scriptures.

The scriptural evidence of Brihad Naradiya Purana gives triple emphasis that there is no other way except Harinama in Kaliyuga. Sage Veda Vyasa confirms the same in Sreemad Bhagwatam 12.13.23.

Please understand that there are infinite forms of devotion, of which chanting of the Holy Name is the foremost. Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has given the following five principal forms of devotion: Association of sadhus, chanting of the Holy Name, hearing of Sreemad Bhagwatam, dwelling in transcendental realm of Mathura Dham, and worship of Deities with firm faith. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has emphatically said that out of these five forms of devotion, Nam-Sankirtana is the best.

(Excerpts from this text, taken from the book "Harikatha and Vaishnava Aparadha" by His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj were published by the Leading Indian National Newspaper, "The Times of India", in one of their editorial columns on 19th July, 2007)

Love God and all His beings

For love of God is essential for human beings to exist in peace with themselves and the rest of the world. According to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Transcendental Divine Love is the strongest spiritual force on earth. It can

establish close relation of love and unity of hearts amongst all human beings and thereby establish real peace in the world. The Vedas say, "Ma hinsat sarvani bhutani" (Don't injure any living thing). If we do not want suffering, we should not injure any jiva (living thing). Divine Love means love of divinity and love of all in relation to divinity. Human beings are selfish. We are not inclined to love others if we can establish a relationship or connection with them. But we easily form attachments to people and things we perceive as our own. For example, parents have a natural love for children.
No parent needs to be taught how to love their own children. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu teaches us that all jivas come from the same source: God. If we love truly God, we will love all living things automatically. Love is superior to non-violence. Non-violence means to abstain from doing injury to others. This is negative aspect, but love means to do good to others, this is positive. Chaitanya's message of Divine Love has of late received universal appreciation in the world and people belonging to different countries, nations and faiths have accepted that only universal love can beget everlasting peace.

Love Supreme Lord

It is a good sign that you have felt the sweetness of the association of Sree Krishna's devotees and Sree Krishna's Name. Sree Krishna is residing within your heart, so there is nothing nearest to you other than Him. He will surely protect you from the negative influences if you sincerely submit to Him. There is nothing to be afraid of - always remember the six-fold teachings of 'Saranagati' (submission to the Lord).

You will not be deceived, will not repent and will not experience frustrations or disappointments if you love Supreme Lord Sree Krishna. We cannot have retribution of love from anybody else in this world other than Supreme Lord Sree Krishna, a suddha-bhakta or a sad-guru (real guru). People will love you in this world only as long as you are able to satisfy their demands. It is not actually love, it is lust. They want only their own sense gratification. Worldly people have so many limitations that they are incapable of meeting the demands of other persons. Supreme Lord Sree Krishna is Absolute. He has nothing to get

from anybody else. Therefore, His love is unmotivated and pure. He can meet all the demands of a person who wants to love Him as He is Supreme in all respects. His Spiritual Transcendental Form is Most Beautiful - all His Transcendental Qualities are the sweetest. Our demands will be fulfilled to an extreme extent beyond our expectation if we can have contact with Him. One can experience great pacification of heart by knowing that His love is causeless and that He does not look into the inefficiencies and drawbacks of the jivas (spirit souls).

Also, He has taken the Most Munificent Form of Lord Sree Gauranga Who goes to all persons door to door, irrespective of their insufficiency, disqualifications, position and status, while praying in a loving mood: "I am embracing you, come and love Me". In spite of this, if we do not love Sree Krishna, then it is our misfortune. Love for Sree Krishna will also foster love for all jivas because they are emanating from the same source.

By incessant chanting of the Holy Name of Sree Krishna (Mahamantra) while avoiding the ten-fold offences, the eternal nature of the real self - love for Sree Krishna, will be manifested.

Excerpts from letters written by His Divine Grace to devotees

Mahaprabhu reveals the divine form of Sri Nrasinga

When Mahaprabhu returned from Gaya, he began to display all the symptoms of one who is intoxicated with love of God. Though nothing could have been more auspicious than this, Sachi Mata became terrified, thinking that her son has gone mad. Word of her anxiety came to Srivas and he came to see her and Nimai. When Srivas came near Him, Mahaprabhu was immediately overcome with divine ecstasy on seeing a devotee of Krishna. When He had recovered, the Lord said, "Everyone thinks that I have gone crazy. They say my humors are

disturbed. What do you think has happened to me?" Srivas laughed and answered, "If your humors have become disturbed, then I want same of that, too. I see that powerful devotional feelings have entered your body. This means that Krishna has been merciful to you."

A relieved Mahaprabhu embraced Srivas and said, "If you too had said that I was going mad, I would have drowned myself in the Ganges." (*Chaitanya Bhagavat* 2.2.113-7)

When Mahaprabhu instituted the loud chanting of the holy names in His own house and in that of Srivas, all the atheistic neighbors began to complain that they were losing sleep because of the noise. They looked for ways to counter the movement and even started false rumors that the king would come soon to punish the devotees. The impressionable Srivas Pandit believed these stories and was filled with anxiety. He began to worship Nrisingha Deva for protection.

Understanding that Srivas was afraid, the Lord, who takes away the distress of His devotees, went to his house. He kicked open the door and said, "Who are you worshiping? Who are you meditating on? Behold! He whom you are worshiping is standing before you. I will save the righteous and destroy the wicked. You should worry no longer!" So saying, He sat down in the heroic posture (virasana) and revealed the divine form of Nrisingha, holding conch, discus, club and lotus.

When Srivas saw this extraordinary manifestation of the Lord, he was overcome with feelings of love and began to recite hymns of praise. Mahaprabhu was pleased with Srivas's recital and told him to call his wife and family members to see His divine form. He gave His prasad to Narayani and showed His mercy to her by making her utter the Holy Name. Just as the devotee is dear to the Lord, the Lord is also dear to His devotee. On 01 April 08.

Make your mind Vrndavana

In the mood of the gopis, saturated with gopi-bhava, Caitanya Mahaprabhu pulled the chariot from the Jagannatha Temple (Kuruksetra) towards Gundica (Vrndavana). During the chariot festival, Krsna, Baladeva and Subhadra make the trip in three chariots.

The day before the festival, Caitanya Mahaprabhu told the devotees, "You see, Krsna will come to the Gundica Temple tomorrow. You must come with Me and cleanse the temple." "Cleansing the temple" means that you must remove all the thorns and rubbish outside and trim the grass. You must clear the path of any stones and sweep away all the dust with a broom. But it also means that you are to engage your sense organs for the service of Krsna. If you do not engage your sense organs for Him, you will not get Him. For this reason, you have to clear your heart of all desires for the attainment of material benefits, both here and hereafter, in heaven. If such desire is there, Krsna will not come. The desire for non-eternal benefits and emancipation, the desire to merge yourself in formless Brahman, the desire to merge yourself in Paramatma, these sorts of desires will deter you from going to Krsna. Krsna will not come to you. For this reason, you have to clear all of this away-these desires are like hard stones. Outside, you clear them away with brooms, and all the devotees bring earthen pots full of water to wash everything. After this, there should be no desire for name and fame and other such things. All of this should be totally removed. For this reason, Caitanya Mahaprabhu, with the help of His own uttri (the cloth that a sannyasi wears around his neck), scrubbed the inside of the temple. There should not be any kind of material desires within the heart, not even those hidden secretly. Then Krsna will come tomorrow.

Krsna is coming here from the Jagannatha Temple, and you have to clear these unwanted things away. This means that you have to clear your mind. There should be no other desire except desire for Krsna. Krsna is coming to Vrndavana. Krsna is the only Autocrat there. No other ideas, forces or persons should dominate your heart, except Krsna. So, you have to make your heart the same as Vrndavana, where Krsna is solely dominant. He is the Sole Proprietor. Caitanya Mahaprabhu says, "I have made this mind Vrndavana, so that Krsna will be free, free to perform all His pastimes and sporting activities." You have to make your mind Vrndavana. No one else should be allowed to enter, and no other thoughts should be allowed.

Mind Your Thoughts!

Controlling our thoughts is easier said than done. Thoughts and ideas flow through our mind endlessly. It's our duty to strive towards mind control as it brings with it inner peace and contentment. And only when one is at peace with oneself that one can strive towards unity with God. Everyone, even gurus who went on to attain enlightenment, have to do intense sadhna (penance) before they can control their thoughts and focus on God. Sense organs clutter our minds with images of the material world, like a camera snapping photographs of the world through our eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin. Fulfilling the demands of the senses gives temporary pleasure, but this pleasure is delusional and ultimately results in suffering. What makes mind control difficult is the fact that our minds are preoccupied with worldly thoughts all the time. It is impossible for us to wipe out these thoughts from our mind all of a sudden. How can you control the mind? According to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the more you imbibe divine thoughts in your mind, the easier it is to purge out worldly ideas. Lord Krishna advises us to practice abhyasyoga (practice) and vairagya (detachment). Actually, vairagya has two implications: detachment to worldly non- eternal objects and attachment to God. Continuous practice of detachment to worldly objects will gradually remove material thoughts that leave us restless and dissatisfied. It will bring an inner peace that will help us develop an unconditional and pure love for the Supreme.

Most Revered Srila Gurudev entered into Nitya Lila

Most revered Srila Gurudev, Patita Pavana Param Pujyapad Om Vishnupad 108

Sri Srimad Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaja entered into Nitya Lila of Supreme Lord at 10:15 PM today, 20 Apr 2017.
He entered into Nitya Lila amidst 6 days long round the clock Sri Harinam Sankirtana, when His favourite bhajan "Radha Kunda Tata Kunja Kutira...", was being sung.

Samadhi will be in Sridham Mayapur.
Following is the schedule of the events:

21 Apr 2017, Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, Kolkata
07:30 AM : Most Revered Srila Gurudev will go down to Natya Mandir
11:40 am : Procession to Sridham Mayapur will start

22 Apr 2017, Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, Mayapur
11:30 am : Bathing of Srila Gurudeva
12:30 pm : Maha Arati and Samadhi of Srila Gurudeva

-Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Math

Nama Acarya Srila Hari Das Thakur

ricikasya muneh putro namna brahma mahatapah
prahladena samam jato haridasakhyako'pi san
murari-gupta-caranaish caitanya-caritamrite
ukto muni-sutah pratas tulasi-patram aharan
adhautam abhishaptas tam pitra yavanatam gatah
sa eva haridasa san jatah parama-bhaktiman

Hari Das Thakur is a combined incarnation of Brahma Mahatapa, the son of Richika Muni and Prahlad. The respected Murari Gupta has written in his Chaitanya Charitamrita that this muni's son picked a tulasi leaf and offered it to

Krishna without having washed it first. His father then cursed him to become a mleccha in his next life. He was thus born as Hari Das, a great devotee. (Gaura-ganoddesha-dipika 93-95)

Hari Das's Birth as a Muslim

In his book Nabadwip-dhama-mahatmya, Bhaktivinoda Thakur has written the following account of how Brahma became Hari Das Thakur:

In the Dvapara Yuga, Nandanandana Sri Krishna was herding the cows through Vraja Dham in the company of his cowherd boyfriends when Brahma decided to test the Lord out of a desire to see his majestic form and opulences. He stole both Krishna's cows and calves, as well as his friends and hid them for a year in the caves of Sumeru Mountain. But a year later, when Brahma returned to Vraja, he was astonished to see that Krishna was still there with both his friends and cattle. Brahma immediately understood his error and began to regret his rash action. He fell down at Krishna's feet and begged him for forgiveness; Krishna responded by mercifully revealing his divine opulence. He who appears in the Dvapara Yuga as Nandanandana Sri Krishna, descends again in the Kali Yuga as Gauranga, taking on the mood and bodily luster of Radharani in order to display the most magnanimous pastimes. Brahma was afraid that he might commit the same offense during Gaura's incarnation so he went to Antardvipa, the central island of Nabadwip, and began to meditate. The Lord was able to understand his mind and so came to him in the form of Gauranga and said, "During my incarnation as Gaura, you will be born in a family of mlecchas and will preach the glories of the Holy Name and bring auspiciousness to all the living beings."

From this above description, it is understood that Hari Das Thakur was an incarnation of the creator god Brahma. It is said that in order to avoid coming under the influence of ahamkara, in Gauranga lila, he prayed to Krishna to take birth in a lowly family. The same idea is found in the Advaita-vilasa.

A Vaishnava may appear in any family in any class of society. Mahaprabhu wished to show that even though he may be born in a lowly family, a Vaishnava is the best of all human society. In order to do so, he had his associates be born in a variety of castes. Vrindavan Das Thakur has written the following in Chaitanya Bhagavat:

Hari Das Thakur was born in a low-caste family on the Lord's order in order to

show that caste and class have no importance at all. All the scriptures say that a devotee of Vishnu, though born in a lowly family, is still worshipable by all. What will one's caste do for one is born in a high caste but does not worship Krishna? He will go to hell in spite of his high birth. Hari Das took a low birth just to bear witness to these scriptural statements. He is comparable to Prahlad who was born in a family of demons, or Hanuman, who was born a monkey. They belong only superficially to low castes.
(Chaitanya Bhagavata 1.16.237-240)

Namacharya Hari Das Thakur appeared in Burihana village. Burihana is currently an administrative region containing 65 blocks (groups of villages) in the Satkhira subdivision of Khulna in Bangla Desh. It is not clear exactly where Burihana village itself lies. Some people hold that Burihana is in West Bengali in the district known as 24 Paraganas, while others think that it is in Jessore district in Bangla Desh. Benapole is the station after Bongaon on the railroad line to Khulna on the Bangla Desh side of the border, so both Benapole and Burihana are currently in Bangla Desh.

According to some people, Hari Das Thakur was born in a Brahmin family. His father's name was Sumati and his mother Gauri. His parents died when he was young, so he went to live with a Muslim couple named Khan in the village of Halimpur about five miles from his birthplace on the other bank of the Salai River. He was thus brought up in an Islamic environment. According to the Advaita-vilasa, however, Hari Das Thakur was born in 1372 of the Shaka era (1451 AD) in the month of Agrahayan and his father's name was Khanaulla Kazi. According to this version also, Hari Das was orphaned young.

Hari Das's Participation in the Sankirtan Movement

Since Mahaprabhu was born in 1407 Shaka, if we accept the Advaita-vilasa's version, Hari Das was 35 years older than Mahaprabhu. It is known that Nityananda was 12 years older than Mahaprabhu, so there was a difference of 23 years between Hari Das and Nityananda also. Hari Das entered into Mahaprabhu's association when the Lord returned to Nabadwip after having been initiated by Isvara Puri in Gaya. This was when the Lord started preaching the sankirtan movement.

Mahaprabhu engaged in his sankirtan pastimes in Nabadwip while in his kaishora age (i.e., when he was between 10 and 15 years old). From this we can

estimate that Hari Das was about 50 years old when he first met Mahaprabhu. By the Lord's wish, Hari Das appeared long before he did. Even before meeting the Lord, Hari Das had already started to reveal the glories of the Holy Names in many wondrous ways. One of the Lord's most important associates in his role as the initiator of the yuga dharma, which is Harinama sankirtan. Vrindavan Das Thakur has described Hari Das's spotless and glorious pastimes extensively in his Chaitanya Bhagavat. Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami has added some extra information about his life and character.

Hari Das Thakur is a major branch of the desire tree of devotion. His character is extraordinary. He would unfailingly chant 300,000 names of the Lord each day. His virtues are unlimited and I can only give a brief summary here. Advaita Acharya gave him the place of honor at his father's shraddha ceremony. Hari Das Thakur possessed the same qualities as Prahlad, being undisturbed even when being beaten by the Muslims. When he entered the Lord's eternal pastimes, Mahaprabhu took his mortal remains in his arms and danced ecstatically. Vrindavan Das Thakur has described his pastimes extensively, I will simply take up what he has left undescribed.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 1.10.43-47)

It is not known exactly when Hari Das Thakur performed the various lilas which have been described, nevertheless we will try to follow a chronological order as far as possible. In the Adikhanda of the Chaitanya Bhagavat, Vrindavan Das Thakur writes about Mahaprabhu's life from his birth until his return from Gaya. The Madhya-khanda describes the Lord after his return from Gaya, his ecstatic transformations in separation from Krishna, his Krishna conscious instructions to his students, his beginning the sankirtan movement with his students, his kirtan pastimes in the houses of Chandrasekhara and Srivasa Pandit, etc., up until he took sannyas. Hari Das Thakur is mentioned in the Madhya-khanda in connection with the Lord's sankirtan pastimes:

In the Madhya-khanda, the Lord falls in to the Ganges in great distress; Nityananda and Hari Das pull him out of the water.
(Chaitanya Bhagavat 1.1.149)

Hari Das Thakur was also a participant in the sankirtan festivities in the houses of Chandrasekhara and Srivasa Pandit.

When the Vaishnavas heard that the Lord had begun his sankirtan pastimes, they

all were overjoyed. Every night he would hold kirtan in the house of Srivasa Pandit, sometimes at the house of Chandrasekhara Acharya. Nityananda, Gadadhara, Advaita, Srivasa, Vidyanidhi, Murari, Hiranya and Hari Das were all there.
(Chaitanya Bhagavat 2.8.110-112)

Hari Das was an eternal associate of the Lord and he incarnated in a Muslim household in order to serve him; from a very early age he showed a proclivity for the chanting of the Holy Names. His life gives a brilliant example of how a devotee who chants constantly without ulterior motivation and without offenses, cannot be swayed from his goal of attaining pure devotional service by any kind of worldly temptation, not even if Maya Devi herself comes to lure him. We summarize what Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami has written in the third chapter of the Antya-lila of Chaitanya Charitamrita.

Temptation by the Prostitute Lakshahira

After Hari Das Thakur had left his home in Burihana, he came to the Benapole jungle, which after the pastime about to be described was given the name Hira Veshya's Jungle. Hari Das would have been in his early youth at this time, as it does not seem that Mahaprabhu had yet appeared when these events took place. He was chanting the Holy Name in a secluded part of the jungle, worshiping Tulasi Devi and chanting his three lakhs of Names. He would beg for food at a Brahmin's house. All the people in the area observed his spotless character and his staunch devotion to the Holy Name and gave him their respect.

At that time, an atheistic Vaishnava hater name Ramachandra Khan was a large landowner in the area. He became jealous of Hari Das Thakur's increasing reputation and decided to ruin it by showing a flaw in his character. To this end he devised numerous tactics, none of which were successful. Finally, he called some prostitutes together and asked them to seduce Hari Das. One of these prostitutes, a very beautiful young girl named Lakshahira, promised that she would able to accomplish the task within three days. Hence, Ramachandra engaged her for this mission.

Ramachandra proposed sending an armed guard with Lakshahira to take Hari Das Thakur prisoner as soon as he had been brought down, but she refused, saying that it would be better to wait until she was sure that Hari Das was ready to fall. That night, she dressed and decorated herself in a most beautiful fashion

and went to Hari Das's hut. The first thing she did when she got there was to pay obeisances to the tulasi plant, showing that she was still influenced by her pious Hindu upbringing.

She then went and stood beside Hari Das. She began to use all the wiles at her command, flirting with him by saying, "You are a very handsome man, Thakur. You are in the full bloom of youth; what woman would be able to resist you? I have come here because I am filled with desire for you. If I don't get your touch, I will kill myself."

In answer to this, Hari Das Thakur said, "I have just begun chanting my regular number of Holy Names. As soon as I am finished I will do as you wish. While waiting, please sit down and listen to the sound of the Holy Name." He kept chanting and chanting until morning, when the prostitute became impatient and left. She returned to Ramachandra Khan and told him the whole story.

She returned again that night to Hari Das's hut, and he expressed his regret at having been unable to fulfill her desires due to his inability to complete his quota of Holy Names. Once again, however, he assured her that as soon as he was finished, he would do whatever she wished. Once again, Lakshahira paid her obeisances to Tulasi Devi and sat down and spent the night waiting for Hari Das to finish his chanting. When morning came, she again grew restless. Hari Das said to her, "I have taken a vow that I will chant 10,000,000 Holy Names before the end of the month. I am now almost finished. As a matter of fact, it should be completed this very night. As soon as it is over, I can sleep with you. Do not worry."

On the third night, Lakshahira returned, again paying obeisances to the tulasi bush and sitting down beside Hari Das Thakur to listen to him chant. As she continued to listen to him chanting, the contaminations in her mind began to melt away and she began to regret her mission. She finally fell down at his feet and begged him forgiveness. She told him all about Ramachandra Khan's evil intentions. Hari Das answered her, "I know all about Ramachandra Khan's wicked plans. I would have left on the very first day, but I wanted to show you my mercy so I stayed for three days."

Lakshahira then asked him to instruct her so that she might be saved. He told her that whatever money she had earned by sinful means should be given in charity to the Brahmins and that then she should come and take up residence in his hut

where she should chant the Holy Names constantly and worship Tulasi Devi.

Lakshahira did exactly as her guru instructed her, giving all her riches to the Brahmins and shaving her head before returning to the hut dressed in a single cloth. She then started to chant three lakhs of names as Hari Das did. By virtue of her service to Tulasi and her chanting of the Holy Name, she became very renounced, all her senses were conquered and she attained pure love for Krishna. Through Hari Das Thakur's mercy, the prostitute had become a great Vaishnavi.

The prostitute became a celebrated devotee and very advanced in spiritual life. Many stalwart Vaishnavas would come to see her.
(C 3.3.141)

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur has commented on Hari Das Thakur's instructions to Lakshahira in the following way: "Even though the guru has a legitimate claim on all of his disciple's worldly possessions, he does not ask for them for his own use. Those who take dakshina, or alms, are opening the door to the house of Yamaraja. A Vaishnava guru is not such a person bound for the house of Yama; he is a traveler on a higher road. For this reason, there is an arrangement for giving donations of material wealth, etc., to Brahmins on the karma-marga. By not accepting his disciple's possessions, which are after all intended for sense gratification, the Vaishnava guru remains independent of his disciple and does not compromise his integrity. He renounces them because he knows that they will awaken in him a disinterest in the service of the Lord. Hari Das Thakur's teaching here is that the guru's duty is to rid his disciple of his mundane pride and not to himself accept the material possessions which the disciple has renounced."
(Anubhashya to Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.3.139)

The Fate of Ramachandra Khan

A Vaishnava does not take offense from anyone for he does not even consider himself to be a Vaishnava. He accepts all suffering that he undergoes to be the result of his own sinful past and thus does not blame anyone for such suffering. Nevertheless, he is so dear to Krishna that the Lord never tolerates offenses to his feet. The Lord never forgives offenses to the feet of a devotee who is constantly engaged in acts for the benefit of all living beings. As a result, there is no other source of self-destruction and misfortune more powerful than offense to a Vaishnava. The results of such offenses may come immediately or they may be

delayed, but they are inevitable.

In the case of Ramachandra Khan, the seeds he had sown in committing these offenses to Hari Das Thakur grew into a great tree, which bore fruit when Nityananda Prabhu came to his house with his associates in his pastimes of saving the fallen souls. As the indwelling soul of all beings, Nityananda was perfectly aware of Ramachandra's record and had in fact come to his house because he was angry and intended to punish him. Though Nityananda Prabhu is known to be the most compassionate, merciful to even the lowliest people, saving sinners like Jagai and Madhai and giving them love of God, he too becomes angry at the offender to the feet of a Vaishnava.

As a result of his offenses to Hari Das Thakur, Ramachandra Khan had become a complete demon and thus was unable to give Nityananda and his companions the proper respect, arranging for living quarters for them in a milkman's cowshed. Nityananda became even more displeased with Ramachandra Khan and left the place. He said, this place is not fit for me, but for a cow-killing meat-eater. Not long after Nityananda Prabhu had left the place, the Muslim tax collector came with his police to collect Khan's overdue taxes. He and his men stayed in the Durga Mandapa at Ramachandra Khan's house and killed a cow there. They took him and his family prisoner and looted the house and village, destroying his caste, his wealth and his family in one fell swoop.

Any town or country in which a great soul is insulted, even if by only one of its inhabitants, is destroyed on account of that offense.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.3.163)

The Offenses of Gopal Chakravarti

Hari Das Thakur left the district of Jessore and came to Hooghly district. He stayed in the village of Chandpur, near Saptagrama-Triveni, at the house of Hiranya and Govardhana Majumdar's family priest, Balaram Acharya. There he stayed in a straw hut and chanted the Holy Names all day long, taking food at Balaram Acharya's house. Raghunatha Das Goswami was a young boy then and he would come to visit Hari Das whose merciful glance made it possible for Raghunatha to later come into Mahaprabhu's direct company.
Hiranya and Govardhana Majumdar would regularly arrange for discussions of the Bhagavat and other scriptures at their house. One day Balaram Acharya brought Hari Das Thakur to this assembly. When he heard about Hari Das

Thakur’s various qualities and that he chanted three lakhs of names every day, Raghunatha’s father Govardhana was very impressed.

While discussing the scriptures, the scholars present brought up the subject of the glories of the Holy Names. One pandit said that the Holy Name destroyed sins, another said that it gave liberation. Hari Das said that the primary fruit of chanting the Holy Name was that it gave love for the lotus feet of Sri Krishna, and the destruction of accumulated sinful karmas and liberation from the material condition were secondary results. He gave the following example: with the first dawn’s light, darkness is dissipated and along with it the fear of thieves, ghosts and demons. With the full rising of the sun, one can set about doing one’s daily duties. Similarly, even before one has experienced the full manifestation of the Holy Name, one’s sins are destroyed and one becomes liberated. With its full manifestation, one attains Krishna prema. The reflection of the Holy Name (namabhasa) brings liberation, but even if the Lord wants to give liberation to his devotee, the devotee does not accept it.

One of the people who heard Hari Das speak was a Brahmin named Gopal Chakravarti, a handsome and learned young scholar who worked as a tax collector for the Muslim government. When he heard that simply the shadow of the Holy Name could bring liberation, he got angry and said, “Fellow scholars! These are the statements of a sentimentalist. After millions of births of practicing knowledge one may still not attain liberation, but this fellows says that just a glimpse of the Holy Name will bring that result.”

Hari Das Thakur answered, “The pleasure of liberation is insignificant when compared to the ecstasy of devotion. Just a shadow of devotion, just a shadow of the Holy Name, will easily give one liberation.”

The Brahmin became even angrier and said, “Hari Das must swear that if one is not liberated by namabhasa, then he shall cut off his nose.”

Hari Das Thakur had no trouble agreeing to this, but the rest of the people in the assembly were shocked by Gopal’s breach of the proper etiquette toward a great spiritual personality. Hiranya and Govardhana rebuked the tax collector. Balaram Acharya also chastised him, saying, “You are a foolish logician. What do you know of devotion? You have insulted Hari Das Thakur. Nothing positive will come of that, you will be ruined on account of it.” All the other members of the assembly fell at Hari Das’s feet and asked for forgiveness for Gopal’s behavior,

but he only said, “Neither he nor you are at fault. The Brahmin is ignorant and addicted to arguing. One cannot understand the glories of the Holy Name through logic. May the Lord bless you all. Don’t worry about me.” The Majumdars ostracized Gopal Chakravarti, refusing him entry to their house.

Though Hari Das Thakur personally took no offense at Gopal Chakravarti’s words, and even forgave him, Krishna does not take the blasphemy of a devotee lightly and so he punished the Brahmin. Three days later he contracted leprosy and his very prominent nose melted and fell off. Everyone was terrified by the Brahmin’s misfortune and glorified Hari Das Thakur’s spiritual power, but it was a source of distress to Hari Das himself.

Hari Das and Advaita Acharya

Hari Das thus quit the region and moved to Phuliya, near Shantipur, where he came into contact with Advaita Acharya. Advaita was born in 1434, 52 years before the appearance of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, so he was 17 years senior to Hari Das.

Advaita Prabhu gave Hari Das the shraddha plate that was normally given only to Brahmins. When Hari Das objected to the honor, “If you eat, it is the equivalent of thousands of Brahmins.” Hari Das daily took his midday meal at Advaita Acharya’s house at his invitation. From Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami’s account, it is apparent that these events took place before Mahaprabhu’s appearance. The primary reason for Mahaprabhu’s incarnation was the devotion and the emotional prayers of both Advaita Acharya and Hari Das Thakur.

[Advaita] began to wonder how the world could be saved. How can this world without devotion for the Supreme Lord ever achieve liberation. He became determined to make Krishna descend and so he began to worship Krishna with Ganges water and tulasi leaves. Meanwhile, Hari Das Thakur was in his grotto chanting the Holy Names and praying for Krishna’s incarnation. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu’s avatar was the result of both these persons’ devotion, by which he saved the world through preaching the chanting of the Holy Names and love of Krishna.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.3.221-4)

A devotee who chants the Holy Name without artifice cannot be swayed from the path of pure devotion, not even by the personification of Maya herself. Once

again, Hari Das Thakur is an outstanding example. There was no object of enjoyment in this entire world that could tempt him. If one sees someone who is apparently taking shelter of the Holy Name, but at the same time succumbs to the temptations of women, wealth and power, it can be understood that he is not truly surrendered to the Name. Phalena phalakaranam anumiyate: one can guess the cause by examining the results. Although one sees the Holy Names being chanted in many places, but one does not often see the desired results. The reason is that those who are doing the chanting are not doing it in a fashion that is sincere, single-minded and offenseless.

Maya Devi Tries to Tempt Hari Das

While Hari Das Thakur was sitting in his grotto near Shantipur and chanting the Holy Names with single-minded devotion, Maya Devi herself came to test him. She took on the form of a beautiful woman and called out to him in a sweet voice that would have toppled even great sages, imploring him to embrace her. Once again, Hari Das told her that he would complete his vow of chanting a fixed number of Harinama, and only then he would satisfy her desires. Although she came three nights in a row in this way, Maya Devi was astonished to see that there was not the slightest wavering in his resolve to chant the Holy Name. She admitted defeat and prayed to him for his mercy. Hari Das Thakur gave her initiation in the Maha Mantra and thus Maya Devi disappeared, feeling that she had been fulfilled.

Previously I received the name of Rama from Shiva; but I had the desire to hear the name of Krishna from you. Rama’s name is the taraka-nama that gives liberation, whereas Krishna’s name is called the paraka-nama because it gives prema. You have made me fortunate by giving me the name of Krishna and I feel a flood of love for him washing over me.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.3.254-6)

Hari Das is Imprisoned and Tortured

From Srila Vrindavan Das Thakur’s Chaitanya Bhagavat, it is known that prior to Hari Das’s coming to meet Advaita Prabhu in Shantipur, he lived in Phuliya. Phuliya is on the Eastern Railway line in Nadia district between Ranaghat and Shantipur, about five miles north of Ranaghat. When the Brahmins of the village saw his dedication to the chanting of the Holy Names as well as his ecstatic symptoms of love, they concluded that he was a Vaishnava of the highest order.

The local magistrate (Kazi), however, knowing that Hari Das had been born in a Muslim household, and now was showing such a taste for chanting the Holy Names of Krishna, began to fear that he might convert others to Vaishnavism. He took his complaint to the governor (Nawab), suggesting that Hari Das be punished as soon as possible. The governor ordered his officers to place Hari Das under arrest. The other prisoners already knew Hari Das's glories and thought that the sight and blessings of such a great spiritual personality would surely bring them merit to insure their early release from jail. But Hari Das told them that they were better off in jail and he blessed them that they stay. The prisoners were naturally unhappy to hear such a statement, but then Hari Das explained his strange blessing:

I don't mean to say that you should remain prisoners, but that you forget sense gratification and that you chant Hare Krishna. This was the meaning of my blessing; please don't be sad for a moment on that account.
(Chaitanya Bhagavat 1.16.63-64)

While in jail, the prisoners could forget the entanglements of material life and simply concentrate on chanting the Holy Name.

One day, the Nawab asked Hari Das why he had abandoned the pure religion of Islam to embrace Hinduism. Hari Das Thakur answered, "God is one. The same God is present in every religion; He is the non-dual absolute truth. In the different religions, it is simply the name that differs, but on the absolute plane, there is no distinction to be made. The same God sits in the heart of every single living being and he engages each one of them in His service in different ways. One worships in the way one is made to worship by Him. There are Hindu Brahmins who convert to Islam. In the same way, though I was born in a Muslim family, I have been engaged by the Lord in chanting the Holy Names of Krishna. The living being has no independence in such matters. If this is a fault, then please punish me."

The Nawab rebuked Hari Das, saying, "Chant the names of God as they are found in your own religion and stop practicing other peoples' religion. If you don't, you will have to face a very severe punishment." Hari Das Thakur answered with conviction:

khanda khanda haï deha jay jadi prana

tabu ami vadane na charii hari-nama

”You may cut my body to pieces, and the life may leave it. But I will never abandon the Holy Name which my tongue will ever continue to chant.”
(Chaitanya Bhagavat 16.91)

This statement demonstrated Hari Das’s unswerving determination in his worship of the Name. The ordinary living entity is bound up in Maya and so considers the well-being of the body to be more important than worshiping the Lord. Those who are transcendentalists recognize that the body and its interests are fleeting, and so they put them aside and concentrate on their real self interest, that of the soul, and worship the Lord.

When the Nawab saw that Hari Das Thakur’s determination to continue chanting the names of Krishna was unbreakable, he asked the Kazi what should be done. The Kazi answered, “He should be given such a severe punishment that other Muslims will be afraid to convert. He should be flogged publicly in 22 market places until he is dead. If after being beaten in 22 market places he is still alive, then we will know that he really has some kind of spiritual power and that he has been telling the truth!”

The Nawab gave the order and several infantrymen took Hari Das Thakur from marketplace to marketplace, giving him a cruel flogging with a cane in each one. Even so, he did not die. Just like Prahlad, Krishna’s mercy protected his body and kept him conscious only of the joys of the Holy Name, and so he did not feel the slightest discomfiture. The pious people of the area who witnessed the merciless beating of Hari Das were greatly distressed. He himself, though being ruthlessly flogged by these sinful people, did not stop praying to the Lord for the well being of his torturers.

”Be merciful to all these poor souls, O Lord! Though they treat me like an enemy, do not consider this to be an offense.”
(Chaitanya Bhagavat 16.110)

Normally, the type of beating that was being given to Hari Das would have killed an ordinary man after only two or three marketplaces. When his torturers saw that he was still alive after 22 marketplaces, they began to worry. The Kazi would not believe that they had really flogged him if Hari Das remained alive, and he would surely punish them by ordering them to be killed. When Hari Das

saw that they were inconvenienced by his remaining alive, he went into a deep trance of meditation on Krishna, appearing to everyone as though dead.

The infantrymen took the body to the Nawab and he ordered it to be buried. But the Kazi objected, saying that because Hari Das had engaged in such reprehensible activities, he should not be buried but thrown in the water. So on the Kazi's order, Hari Das's body was flung into the Ganges. To everyone's surprise, Hari Das floated to the other shore where he climbed onto dry land and started chanting the Holy Names in a loud voice, walking in the direction of Phuliya. Both the Nawab and the Kazi realized that he was a real saint or pir and they fell to the ground in obeisances and begged him for forgiveness. By his grace, they were able to become free of their evil misdeeds. The Nawab gave Hari Das official permission to go wherever he pleased and to chant the Holy Names.

In the tenth chapter of the Madhya-khanda, Vrindavan Das Thakur writes that while Hari Das was being cruelly beaten, Mahaprabhu descended with his discus, intending to destroy the demons, but was unable to do so on account of Hari Das's prayers. So he shielded Hari Das's body with his own. Then he revealed to Hari Das the cane marks on his back. The main reason for the Lord's appearance is his devotee. When such an outrage was being perpetrated on his devotee Hari Das, he immediately appeared to protect him.

When Hari Das heard the Lord recount this story, he immediately fainted. The Lord then showed him his divine form. He glorified Hari Das himself: "Anyone who even sees Hari Das becomes free from all bondage. Even great gods like Brahma and Shiva desire Hari Das's company. Even the Ganges desires his touch."

The Brahmins of Phuliya were overjoyed to see Hari Das again. They had been paralyzed by the news that Hari Das was being flogged in all the marketplaces of the district. Hari Das told them that these events had been the result of hearing the blasphemy of Vaishnavas, which in itself is a great offense. Indeed, the punishment that he had received could be considered minimal.

Hari Das, the Snake and the Snake-charmer

In the grotto at Phuliya where Hari Das did his bhajan lived a poisonous snake. Visitors to Hari Das's place of residence were placed in some discomfort

because of the poisonous fumes emanating from this beast. Some local doctors, who were particularly expert in dealing with snakebite, warned Hari Das and advised him to leave his place of worship. At the consistent pleadings of all the people, Hari Das finally agreed to move. However, just before sunset, as he was about to leave, the great serpent left the grotto of its own accord.

Another lesson that can be taken from Hari Das's life is that making a public display of love of Krishna in order to gain public prestige is very detrimental to one's devotional life. One day, a snake charmer from Phuliya village went to a rich man's house to sing Krishna's pastime of taming the serpent Kaliya. Hari Das was present, and when he heard the lilas of Krishna became so affected by love that he fainted in the assembly and the various manifestations of ecstatic love became present on his body. All the people present took the dust of Hari Das's feet and smeared it on their bodies.

A certain Brahmin who was present there saw the respect that the people were showing to Hari Das and became jealous. The shameless fellow had such a strong desire for prestige that when the snake charmer continued his song, he too fell to the ground and began to make a show of all kinds of false ecstasies. The snake charmer could recognize the faker for what he was and started to hit him with a cane. The Brahmin began to scream, "Father! Mother!" and ran away. This particular pastime shows that even a humble snake charmer can possess the simplicity to distinguish between real and faked ecstatic symptoms. He explained to everyone present the naturalness of Hari Das's love and the falseness of the Brahmins pretense.

The Loud Chanting of the Holy Names

Hari Das Thakur constantly chanted the Holy Name and called to the Lord in a loud voice. At that time, not many people were able to understand the value of this practice. Prior to Gauranga-sundara's appearance, most people were simply interested in sense gratification and were inimical to devotion for Krishna and the chanting of his holy names. Advaita Acharya and Hari Das Thakur were saddened by this terrible situation. When the non-devotees heard them chanting loudly, they would say, "The Lord sleeps during the four months of the rainy season. If you call him out loud in this way, you will wake him up and that will be a grave offense. There will be famine in the country if you keep on with it. Some Brahmins have taken up this chanting business as a way of worshiping their own bellies, no doubt." They would criticize Hari Das and Advaita by

joking in this way. Even though such criticism pained Hari Das, he never stopped chanting Hare Krishna in a loud voice.

One day, a Brahmin from a village named Harinadi (in Jessore district) started a debate with Hari Das on this subject. He argued that the names of the Lord should be meditated upon and that there was no reason to chant them aloud. He wanted to know in which scripture it was stated that one should chant aloud. In answer to these questions, Hari Das Thakur gave a detailed account of the glories of the Holy Name. He said that loud chanting of the Holy Names was a hundred times more powerful than japa. Through the loud chanting of the Names, even the birds, animals and other creatures are also saved.

Animals, birds, insects and other creatures are unable to speak, but if they just hear the Holy Name, they can all cross over. If you chant the Holy Names silently, then you yourself will be saved, but if you chant aloud, then you will benefit others. Therefore, all the scriptures state that by the loud chanting of the Name, a hundred times greater result can be obtained.
(Chaitanya Bhagavat 1.16.280-2)

japato harinamani sthane shata-gunadhikah
atmanam ca punaty uccair japan shrotnn punati ca
(Naradiya Purana)

Someone who chants the Holy Names aloud is a hundred times better than one who performs japa, because the one who chanting japa simply benefits himself, while the person who chants japa aloud not only does good for himself, but for all those who hear him as well. Who is better, the person who earns money and spends it all on himself, or the one who uses his money to support a thousand others? Through japa, one takes care of his own spiritual life, while through ucca-sankirtan, all living beings are benefited. This is the reason for its being considered superior.

Even though he heard Hari Das quote scripture in support of his idea, the Brahmin from Harinadi village was unconvinced. Indeed, he became angry and began to verbally abuse Hari Das by bringing up his low birth. He said, “If everything that you say about the Holy Name is not found in scripture, then I will publicly cut off your nose and ear as a punishment.” As a result of this offensive behavior, the Brahmin contracted smallpox not long afterward and his own nose and ear fell off.

Hari Das Comes to Nabadwip

After this, Hari Das Thakur then went to live in Nabadwip out of a desire to be with pure devotees like Advaita Acharya. There he was a participant in the Lord's sankirtan pastimes in the houses of Srivasa Pandit and Chandrasekhara Acharya. Mahaprabhu sent Hari Das and Nityananda Prabhu to go from door to door to beg people to chant the names of Krishna, to worship him and to study the Vaishnava scriptures.
One day, the Lord suddenly had an idea and he called Nityananda and Hari Das to tell them: "Listen, listen, Nityananda. Listen, Hari Das. I wish you to go and communicate my order to everyone. Go to every house and beg people to chant the names of Krishna, worship Krishna, study about Krishna. Other than this, say nothing and make others say nothing. At the end of the day, come here and tell me the results of your preaching. You will beg people in this way, and I will come and destroy those who do not comply with my discus in my hand." (Chaitanya Bhagavat 2.13.7-11)

Nityananda Prabhu and Hari Das Thakur followed the Lord's order and began preaching everywhere in Nabadwip. One day they went up to two feared drunken bandits named Jagai and Madhai, and asked them to chant the Holy Name as the Lord had instructed them. Seeing their fallen condition, Nityananda became merciful toward them, but Jagai and Madhai were in such a state of intoxication that they simply became angry when they heard his appeal, and came forward to beat him and Hari Das up. Nityananda started to run away, but Hari Das being already quite advanced in age (58) was unable to keep up with him. Nevertheless, he somehow managed to escape with his life. Hari Das told Advaita Acharya about the day's events, saying that he would not go out preaching with Nityananda any more, since his behavior was rash and unpredictable. The all-powerful Lord Nityananda's running away is certainly a mysterious pastime, but it is to be remembered that he later went out on his own and managed to deliver the two rascals, Jagai and Madhai.

Hari Das Thakur also engaged in water sports with the Lord in Nabadwip. One day, overcome by a mood of love, the Lord tried to drown himself in the Ganges, and Hari Das and Nityananda jumped in to save him. They hid Mahaprabhu in the house of Nandana Acharya because of his wish for seclusion. When Advaita Acharya and the other devotees were feeling the distress of separation, they went and brought Srivasa there and reunited the devotees with the Lord.

When Mahaprabhu put on a play about Krishna's Vrindavan pastimes in the house of Chandrasekhara Acharya, Hari Das played the part of the town constable. He came onto the scene, dressed as a policeman, carrying a stick in his hand. The other actors in the play were Mahaprabhu as Adya shakti, Nityananda as an old cowherd woman, Advaita as the clown, Gadadhara Pandit as a cowherd girl, and Srivasa Pandit as Narada Muni. Hari Das's duty in the play was to awaken everyone to the service of Krishna. He cried out, "Wake up! Wake up! Wake up! Srivasa will dance dressed as Narada Muni." (Chaitanya Bhagavat 2.18.100)

When the Lord took his sankirtan party along the banks of the Bhagirathi, Hari Das joined him. Then Hari Das, the ocean of Krishna-rasa, on Mahaprabhu's order, danced beautifully.
(Chaitanya Bhagavat 2.23.204)

The night before Mahaprabhu left to take sannyas, Hari Das was staying at his house. He and all the other devotees were desolated by the Lord's intention to take the renounced order. When the Lord went to Puri. Hari Das went there not long afterwards to see the Rathayatra and never left.

Hari Das Thakur in Puri

When in Puri, though Hari Das was not officially banned from going into the Jagannath temple or the house of Kashi Mishra (where Mahaprabhu was staying), out of humility at his lowly birth, never went there. Rupa and Sanatan Goswamis also demonstrated a similar humility, even though they were born in a very high-caste Brahmin family. They considered themselves to be no better than mlecchas because of their long association with the Muslim court. They would stay with Hari Das when in Puri and not go for darshan of Jagannath or Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu himself would go to meet them.
Neither Hari Das, Rupa, nor Sanatan would go to the Jagannath temple. Mahaprabhu would go there to see the Upala-bhoga in the morning. He would then go to the place where they were staying and would visit them there. It was thus the Lord's regular practice to meet whichever one of these three was staying in Puri at the time.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.1.63-65)

During Lord Jagannath's absence from the temple (anavasara-kala), Mahaprabhu

would feel separation so intensely that he would go to stay in Alalanath. When he heard the that more than 200 devotees had come from Bengal, he returned to Puri to meet them. When he did not see Hari Das Thakur, he inquired after him. Hari Das was there, but paying his obeisances at the side of the highway. The devotees went to Hari Das and told him that Mahaprabhu wanted to see him. Hari Das said,

”I am a low-born person who has no good qualities. I have no right to go near the temple. If I can find a solitary place to stay in some garden somewhere, then I will pass my time there alone. That way there is no danger that the servants of Jagannath will accidentally touch me. This is my wish.”
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.11.165-7)

The devotees came back to Mahaprabhu to report what Hari Das had said, and his wish pleased him. He arranged for a house in a solitary garden not far from his own place of worship at Kashi Mishra’s house. Kashi Mishra was happy to have the chance to serve the Lord by making these arrangements according to his order. The Lord went to talk to Hari Das and when he saw him paying his dandavats, lifted him from the ground and embraced him. When Hari Das said, “I am an untouchable. Lord, you should not touch me”, the Lord answered:

”I touch you just to become purified, for your standard of purification is non-existent in me. At every moment you are bathing in the water of every holy place; at every moment you are performing all sacrifices, penances and charity. You constantly are performing the pious activity of studying the Veda. You are more purifying than any Brahmin or sannyasi.”

After saying this, the Lord took him to the flower garden and gave him the solitary room there as a place to stay. “Stay here and chant the Holy Names. I will come every day to visit you here. You can see the discus on the pinnacle of the temple tower from here. When you see it, pay your obeisances to it. I will arrange for Jagannath’s prasad to be brought to you here.”
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.11.189-95)

This flower garden is now known by the name, Siddha Bakula. Previously it was named Mudra Math. There is a legend connected with the Siddha Bakula tree. The local pandas have a tradition of giving the twig that is used to clean Jagannath’s teeth as prasad to some special person. One day they gave a twig from a bakula tree that had so been used as a gift to Mahaprabhu. The Lord

planted this twig in the ground at Hari Das's place of bhajan. This twig eventually grew into a large tree. It is said that the Lord planted the twig on the first day of the month of Chaitra also known as Mahavishuva Sankranti, i.e. the day when the sun enters into the sign of Aries. For this reason, a festival named the Danta-kashtha-ropana Mahotsava is held on that day ever year to celebrate the occasion.

Srila Hari Das Thakur participated in the kirtan during the Rathayatra festival as the main dancer in one of the seven kirtan sampradayas. He was in the third group, which had Mukunda Datta as its lead singer.

Hari Das's Teachings on the Holy Name

Mahaprabhu taught the glories of the Holy Name through Hari Das Thakur. One day, the Lord was feeling particularly unhappy about the lot of the conditioned souls. He came to Siddha Bakula and said to the Thakur: "Hari Das, in the age of Kali, the non-Hindus kill the cow and are inimical to the Brahmins. How will these Muslims ever be saved?" Hari Das answered, "Don't be distressed at seeing the pitiable condition of the Muslims. They will be liberated by the namabhasa, the shadow of the Holy Name, whenever they say haram. In the Nrisingha-purana it is said, [1]

damshtri-dantahato mleccho harameti punah punah
uktvapi muktim apnoti kim punah shraddhaya grinan

When wounded by the tusks of a boar, the Muslim cries out "Harama, Harama!" again and again. If he attains liberation by so doing, then just think what will be the result if one chants the name of Rama with faith.

Bhaktivinoda Thakur says that if any Muslim dies while saying this word, he is immediately liberated. This is namabhasa or nama-sanketa because the speaker makes the correct sound but does not intend the Lord Rama. Therefore, it is impossible to say just what fruits await the sincere and faithful chanter. The example is given of Ajamila who called the name of his son Narayan as he was dying, and through this namabhasa he attained liberation.

When he heard this explanation, Mahaprabhu was very pleased, but again he asked Hari Das, "How will the dumb animals and the trees, etc., be delivered?" Hari Das answered:

”You yourself have instituted the loud chanting of the Holy Names which both the moving and non-moving creatures can hear. The mobile creatures are freed from their bondage to repeated birth and death by hearing the names. As for the immobile, they perform kirtan themselves by echoing the sounds. By your indescribable mercy, the entire universe is engaged in kirtan and the mobile and immobile beings dance when they hear it... You preached the loud chanting of the Holy Names by which the repeated births and deaths of all living beings come to an end.”
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.3.68-71, 75)

The Disappearance of Hari Das Thakur

Rupa and Sanatan Goswami first met Hari Das when he accompanied Mahaprabhu on his aborted first trip to Vrindavan, when he visited Ramakeli. They thus knew each others’ virtues quite well. One day in Puri, Hari Das recited the glories of Sanatan Goswami, then Sanatan returned the favor by praising him as follows:

”Who else is there who is your equal? You are the most fortunate amongst Mahaprabhu’s entourage. The purpose of the Lord’s incarnation is the preaching of the Holy Name; this personal work of the Lord was done through you. Every single day you chant three lakhs of Holy Names and you glorify the Holy Name to everyone you meet. Some people act properly but do not deliver the message of Krishna consciousness, while others preach but do not meet the behavioral standards. You, sir, both demonstrate ideal behavior as well as preaching. You are the guru of all and the perfect human being in this universe.”
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.4.99-103)

In the eleventh chapter of the Chaitanya Charitamrita’s Antya-lila, Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami describes the disappearance of Hari Das Thakur in a most captivating way. It should be read in its entirety on the occasion of Hari Das’s disappearance day. A brief summary is given here:

namami hari dasam tam caitanyam tam ca tat-prabhum
samsthitam api yan-murtim skandhe kritva nanarta yah

I offer my obeisances to Hari Das as well as to his worshipable lord, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, who placed his body on his shoulders and danced.

As Hari Das Thakur grew old, it became more and more difficult for him to maintain his vow of chanting three lakhs of names every day. Thus, he had no appetite when Govinda would come with Jagannath's prasad and only to avoid disrespecting the holy food would he eat a single grain of rice. Out of his affection for Hari Das, Mahaprabhu told him that he was a perfected being and that there was no need for him to show such attachment for devotional service in practice; he could thus reduce the number of Holy Names that he chanted every day. Hari Das then revealed what was really bothering him.

He knew that Mahaprabhu would soon be ending his pastimes in this world and he wished to leave before him. The affectionate Lord granted him his wish, even though he felt desolate at the prospect of losing his company.

Hari Das Thakur sat in front of Mahaprabhu who was standing in front of him. Then, as the tears flowed from his eyes, he gazed at the Lord's lotus face and took his lotus feet on his chest and, while chanting the names "Krishna Chaitanya", voluntarily left his body like Bhishma.

The devotees became intoxicated by the kirtan which grew louder and louder, and the Lord lifted Hari Das's body and started to dance around the courtyard. In the accompaniment of the loud singing of the Holy Names, he and the devotees took Hari Das's remains to the beach. There they washed the body in the sea and then dug a hole in the sand where they placed it. Mahaprabhu was the first to throw sand into the samadhi. This is how the samadhi ritual of Hari Das Thakur was performed. By virtue of his presence, the seashore became a great place of pilgrimage.

Mahaprabhu circumambulated the burial place and then went personally to the Jagannath temple to beg for prasad for a feast in honor of Hari Das. Svarupa Damodar Goswami would not let Mahaprabhu carry the prasad himself, but took care of making all the arrangements himself. At the feast, all the devotees were given enough food to eat to their fill. In a mood of absorption in divine love, Mahaprabhu said to all the devotees:

”All those who witnessed the disappearance festival of Hari Das Thakur, who danced or sang the Holy Names there, who came to throw sand on his samadhi or took maha prasad on this occasion, will quickly attain Krishna. This is the fruit of seeing a great personality like Hari Das Thakur. The Supreme Lord was

so merciful that he gave me his association, and now the independent Lord has wished to deprive me of it. When Hari Das decided that he wanted to leave, there was nothing I could do to keep him back. He left his body at the very moment that he desired to do so, just as we have heard that Bhishma did. Hari Das was the exemplar of humanity in this world, and now that he is gone, the world has lost a jewel. All glories to Hari Das Thakur! Chant the Lord's names!" And having finished his eulogy, the Lord began once again to dance. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.11.91-98)

Hari Das Thakur's tirodhana-lila took place on the fourteenth day of the waxing moon in the month of Bhadra.

Nand-nandan Sri Krishna

All the avatars of Bhagavan are either plenary portions (amsha) or portions of the plenary portions (kalaa) of the Lord.

All of The Avatars appear millennium after millennium to protect the planets from disturbances created by the demons.

But They are not equal to Nand-nandan Sri Krishna as He is the Supreme Lord Himself.

-- Sreemad Bhagawatam 1.3.28

The Svarupa or svayam-rupa, Vrajendranandan Sri Govind is the Cause of causes.

-- Sri Brahm Samhita 5.1

All twelve rasa (five main and seven secondary mellows or moods) are

manifested in their complete form only in Sri Nand-nandan Krishna. So, even though all the manifestations of the Supreme Being are one, the excellence of rasa is only fully realized in the original form of Nand-nandan Sri Krishna.

Necessity of moral and spiritual training in Education

The present-day world appears to be running fast towards destruction.
As per Indian scriptural evidence, the conditioned souls are enveloped by Lord's illusory energy consisting of three primal qualities— Sattva, Rajah, and Tamah. 'Tamah' indicates tendency to commit vice or to inflict injury. In fact, tamah tendency has now engulfed the whole world and is spreading over like fire and showing its most monstrous destructive ugly appearance.
The sagacious persons are bewildered to find any solution of this terrible tendency of violence.
By Rajah-guna living beings are created, by Sattva-guna they are maintained and by Tama-guna they are destroyed. Living beings are non-eternal. Human beings are the best amongst all kinds of created species, because they have got the discriminating power between good and bad, eternal and non-eternal, vice and virtue. Eating, sleeping, defending and mating are equal in beasts and human beings but human beings are superior because of their discriminating power. Practically it is demonstrated now that the human beings have become the greatest enemy of their own species. They are causing unnatural deaths without considering the innocence of the killed— whether they are children or women, whom the killers have never seen and who have never done any harm to the killers. It is the greatest shame of such human beings to claim the false vanity of being the best amongst created beings.
Lord does not think much about sins of other living beings who have got no such discriminating power. They do actions out of instinct. But God has bestowed discriminating power to human beings. In spite of that if they commit heinous crimes, surely they will be punished. They will never be spared. They are lowering the status of humanity. We may commit heinous crimes by deceiving

ignorant human beings, beasts and birds, but we cannot deceive Supreme Lord Who is Omniscient. Lord is residing in the heart of every individual soul. 'Karmanye va dhikaraste ma phaleshu kadachana' —Bhagvad Gita

As human being has got relative independence, he can do good and bad deeds by good or bad use of his relative independence. But the fruits of those deeds are controlled by Supreme Lord and not by conditioned souls of the world. Out of ignorance, conditioned souls always have the aptitude to blame others for their sufferings.

When human beings have lost the capacity to understand difference between civilization and non-civilization, good and bad, they have lost everything. There is one pithy saying to know the criterion to understand which is good and bad, beneficial and non-beneficial— 'When wealth is lost, nothing is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; and when character is lost, everything is lost.' Now there is competition of who can become wealthier, mutual rivalry between haves and have-nots. This wrong conception and rivalry between haves and have-nots have engulfed the whole human race and they are becoming more and more ferocious and murderous. Even some of them have got the ghastly mentality of endeavoring to invent horrible bombs to destroy all living beings. Is it the criterion to understand development of civilization? But this most heinous mentality is spreading like fire very fast, which may ultimately lead to complete destruction. The sensible persons should think now very seriously to save the situation from such devastation. The highest importance should be given now for character building of the human society. The root cause of such venom is false ego— wrong conception of self, consequently causing false interests. Those who have lost the basic knowledge of self-realization have become completely blind and they are making others blind.

Indian saints have given knowledge of that path of self-realization by holding discourses on authentic scriptures and by writings. Only theoretical knowledge is not sufficient, there should also be practical spiritual life. 'Example is better than precept'. This must be started forthwith and introduced in education system. Character building is the backbone of the nation and human civilized society. But most important is that the instructor should have practical moral and spiritual character. 'Don't follow me, follow my lecture' should not be the way of teaching. Only theoretical lectures without practical life will not be actually effective.

In oxford dictionary, 'Education' is defined as— systematic instruction, course of this, development of character; 'Character' is defined as— mental or moral

qualities. The word ‘secular’ is very often used in Education. As per Oxford dictionary, secular means— ‘concerned with the affairs of the world, not spiritual, and not sacred’. When secular word is not sacred, what is the reason to feel hesitation in introducing basic moral and spiritual education to children and the youth? If citizens of the country have got no basic moral and spiritual qualities, how can we think about good governance of the country by the citizens without moral and spiritual backbone?

Need for Shelter of a Sadguru

We have got the aptitude to endeavour to get a thing when we feel it’s efficacy and necessity. Similarly when we shall understand the importance of accepting Guru, we shall naturally try to get a Spiritual Guide and shall search for a Bonafide Guru. A scriptural evidence in regard to this is referred to here from Srimad Bhagavatam, quintessence of all scriptures – 11th Canto, Nimi-Navayaugaindra Samvada (a dialog between Emperor Nimi and nine renowned saints) —

Once nine young sons of Sree Rishabhdeva, known as ‘Navayogendra’, set their holy footprints at the sacrificial site of Sree Nimi, emperor of Videha. Emperor Nimi worshipped Rishis with great reverence and devotion and asked nine questions. One relevant question

yathaitam aisvarim
mayam dustaram
akritatmabhiha taranty
ajnaha sthula-dhiyo
maharsa idam
ucyatam Bhagavat 11
/ 3 / 17

Nimi Maharaj said, “O great saints! Please tell me how human beings with the wrong conception of thinking body to be the person and having no control over the sense-organs can easily surmount the unsurmountable ocean of births and deaths and threefold afflictions, caused by their aversion to Lord and consequent envelopment by Lord’s external potency of three primal qualities – Sattva, Rajah and Tamah. Prabuddha Muni, one of the nine Munis (realised souls) replied —

Karmanyarabhamananam
dukha-hatyai
sukhaya ca paayet
paka-viparyasam
mithuni-carinam
nrinam Bhagavat 11
/ 3 / 18

Human beings in this world first start acting by singular effort, then continue the same with wife and later on with increased number of family members, by procreating children, to remove afflictions and get happiness, but the consequence is reverse. They can neither remove afflictions nor get happiness. The cause of this nescience is that they have forgotten their eternal master and are infatuated by the illusory energy and as such, wrongly think themselves to be masters and enjoyers of this world and want to lord it over others and enjoy. Vide verse 3/27 of Gita —

prakriteha
kriyammanani
gunaih karmni
sarvasah ahankara-
vimudhatma
kartaham iti
manyate

‘Now hear me and understand the difference between the wise and the unwise. Being enveloped by nescience, a conditioned soul wrongly thinks the actions done by three ‘gunas’
— primal qualities of external potency— are done by him. He thinks that he is the doer. This indicates an unwise person’ — Thakur Bhakti Vinode.

Material energy has got three qualities — Sattva, Rajah and Tamah. So there are three principal material egos. When Sattva predominates, ego is denominated as Sattvik, when Rajah predominates Rajasik and when Tamah predominates — Tamasik. Conditioned souls being enchanted by the external potency of Supreme Lord think themselves the masters and enjoyers. Therefore they are eager to enjoy the world. They think that they are blessed and

fortunate if they can get higher status in the society and can get enjoyments of the world. They think if they can earn plenty of money, they will be happy. It is due to this conviction that they say — 'This world is ruled by money'. For this reason the unwise persons have got the aptitude to earn money by fair means of foul. Prabuddha Muni has clearly stated —

nityartidena vittena
durlabhenatma-
mrityuna
grihapatyapta-
pasubhiha ka prithih
sadhitais calaiha
Bhagavat 11 / 3 / 19

The human beings who are covetous to get money for their happiness commit blunder, because worldly wealth is always painful. If they do not get money, they are unhappy as they cannot fulfil their desires. Secondly, at the time of earning money, they are to undergo immense tribulation and worries. Furthermore, there is extreme tension of mind to preserve the earned money. When money is lost or taken away, they have extreme separation grief. Everything in this world is such — if we do not get, we are unhappy, if we get, we are unhappy, if we lose it, we are unhappy. Even at the risk of life human beings are trying to earn money.

ko nvartha-trisnam
visrijet pranebhyo

’pi ya ipsitaha
yam krinatyasubhiha
presthais taskaraha
sevako vanik
Bhagavat 7 / 6 /10

Money is more dear than life. How it is possible for a conditioned soul to give up the desire for money? As for example thieves, military government servants and merchants earn money even at the risk of their lives. Therefore, money is, in the truest sense, always a cause of pain. Again, the hard earned money is spent for non-eternal requirements – construction of buildings, maintenance of family members— wife, children and close relatives, protection of domestic animals, etc. What happiness one can get by devoting his energy for non-eternal things? They cannot get an iota of happiness. The presiding deity of money is Lakshmi Devi. Sree Narayana is the enjoyer of Lakshmi Devi (wealth). If money is offered for the service of Narayana, it will bestow eternal benefit. But such a person in this Prison House – material world - is rarely to be found, who earns money for the service of Supreme Lord Narayana. For this reason this illustration is not generally applicable.

Further, in case anybody argues that he can have happiness in higher worlds - heaven etc.- Prabuddha Muni has stated as follows:-

evam lokam param
vidyan nasvaram
karma-nirmitam sa-
tulyatisaya-
dhvamsam yatha
mandala-vartinam
Bhagavat 11 / 3 / 20

As you find in this world there is rivalry between emperors of different territories and malice to superiors, so in higher worlds acquired by worldly endeavour, we find the same unrest and trouble. By enjoyment in this world, our objects of enjoyment and organs of enjoyment are decayed, likewise, in higher worlds acquired by human efforts, after piety is exhausted by human enjoyment, human beings will have to come down to this world.

Therefore, O man! Give up your vanity of material ego that you are the master and enjoyer and can know your eternal welfare and take absolute shelter at the Lotus Feet of a bonafide realised saint who can show you the

actual path of eternal welfare.

uttistha jagrata

prapya varan nibodhata
ksurasya dhara nisita
duratyaya durgam pathas tat
kavayo vadanti
— Katha Upanishad
1.3.14

Refrain from various thoughts of this world, rise up, reinstate in your self by giving up all non-eternal desires. Sincerely endeavour to realise God by the grace of saintly persons (realised souls). This world is like a sharp razor and very difficult to cross over. There is no way to get deliverance from worldly bondage without taking absolute shelter of a Bonafide Guru to worship God. This is the advice of realised souls. As a diseased person cannot treat himself, he is to take the help of an experienced doctor. Doctor, after examination, will diagnose the disease and prescribe medicine and appropriate diet. If diagnosis is correct, the patient will recover from the disease. Similarly, the malady of births and deaths and threefold afflictions cannot be removed by human efforts. It is essential to take shelter of a Bonafide Guru —– bonafide spiritual doctor. An experienced doctor is capable of treating the patient, but a doctor in name, without experience, cannot treat the patient. So-called gurus, so-called sadhus, cannot have the capacity to treat the disease of enslaved jivas— embodied souls.

Never ignore the superiors

Presently, we are in this black age of Kali-yuga. The span of time for this Kali-

yuga is 432,000 years. Double of this (864,000 years) is the duration of the Dvapara-yuga. Triple of the Kali-yuga (1,296,000 years) is the duration of the Treta-yuga and quadruple it (1,728,000 years) is the length of the Satya-yuga, the 'Golden Age'. If you add the total time of these four yugas together, the sum is 4,320,000 years. If the span of time covered by these four ages is multiplied by seventy-one (306,720,000), then that is the span of life of one Manu. The fourteen Manus are sons of Brahma, and are called 'Manu' because they were created by the mind of Brahma. The total number of years in which the lives of fourteen Manus have passed, (14 * 306,720,000 = 4,294,080,000 years) equals one day of Brahma. Such seven days (30,058,560,000 years) would be the lifespan of Markendeya Rishi. How did he get such a boon?

Mrikanda had learned from an astrologer that his son, Markendeya would die at the age of ten. So, he was in a very melancholy state. He could find no peace of mind. "Here is my only son," he thought, "and that son will die at the age of ten?" He went to his son and instructed him, "Whenever any elder persons come to see you, you should bow down to him. You should make prostrated obeisances to him." As per the instructions of his father, whenever an elder person of respectable stature came to their house, Markendeya made prostrated obeisance to him.

By chance, the Saptarishis (the seven rishis), also the sons of Brahma, set their holy footprints in the house of the descendents of Bhrigu, and the boy, Markendeya, fell flat at their feet.

The rishis blessed him. "May he live eternally!" they exclaimed.

The boy's father was astonished. He approached the rishis and said, "But my son is destined to die at the age of ten. Now you have given him a boon, but will this boon be effective?"

"Oh, is that true?" the rishis asked. They were perturbed because they wanted to award the child some sort of boon. They took the boy to Satya-loka, the planet of Brahma. They told their father, "We went to this boy's house only to set our holy footprints there and this boy, out of affection, fell flat at our feet. He is unfortunately destined to live ten years only."

"No!" cried Brahma. "His span of life is seven days of mine!" Thus, Brahma gave him this boon.

We should never ignore our superiors. We are learning this lesson from the son of Mrikanda, Markendeya Rishi. If we bow down to parents, elders, Vaishnavas and Sadhus, then by their grace, we shall be able to get things we cannot imagine. On 23 Aug 08.

Nityananda Prabhu blesses Raghava Pandit

Mahaprabhu ordered Nityananda Prabhu to take His Associates and leave Puri to preach pure devotion in Bengal. While wandering through Ganges valley, Nitai was attracted by Raghava Pandit's pure devotional attitude and came to his house in Panihati. Along with Him came the three Ghosh brothers, Govinda, Madhava and Vasudeva, who were known for their ability as kirtaniyas. When they started singing, Nityananda fell into a trance-like state and started to dance. When He had finished dancing, he sat on the deities' altar; Nityananda Prabhu's entourage and Raghava Pandit performed an elaborate *abhishek*ceremony to honor Him. After the bathing ceremony, they dressed and garlanded Him, whereupon Nityananda sat down again on the deities' throne while Raghava Pandit held the parasol.

At this moment, a miraculous event occurred. Nityananda Prabhu, still in a trance-like state, ordered Raghava Pandit to quickly bring him a garland of kadamba flowers. Raghava answered that kadamba trees were not yet in flower. Nityananda Prabhu told him to look around the grounds of his house and he would find the flowers. As Raghava searched, he was amazed to find kadamba flowers blossoming on a lime tree. He quickly picked the flowers and made a garland, which he placed around Nityananda's neck.

A few moments later, the house was filled with the fragrance of damanaka flowers. Nityananda Prabhu said that Mahaprabhu Himself had come from Puri wearing a damanaka garland to hear the kirtan. Narahari Chakravarti Thakur mentions this dance and kirtan in his *Bhakti-ratnakara*.

Observing Janmashtami Festival with Srila Gurudeva

HDG Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj, after concluding his summer tour to the US and the Pacific, arrived at Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, 35, Satish Mukherjee Road, Kolkata at 11p.m. on 29th August 2002. He was received by hundreds of devotees who had arrived at the Math from all over West Bengal and other parts of India. Next day, on the holy Adhivas Tithi (preliminary function before any holy occasion) of Sri Krishna Janmashtami, Srila Gurumaharaj inaugurated the 5-day Janmashtami Festival with a divine discourse in the morning. He narrated and explained the divine words of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur Prabhupad, on the same holy tithi in 1826 at Sri Bagh Bazaar Gaudiya Math, Ultadingi Road, Kolkata. Gurumaharaj said that Sri Krishna will appear the next day and all should engage themselves in His service in order to clear and purify their hearts for Him to appear. In the afternoon, the devotees were enchanted by sankirtan by Gurumaharaj in the Nagar Sankirtan procession through the streets of Kolkata.

Later, in the evening, the first meeting of the 5-day festival was held which was presided over by Hon'ble Justice B. P. Bandyopadhayaya and the Chief-guest was Hon'ble Justice A. M. Sinha. These were amongst the distinguished speakers besides Gurumaharaj.

Next day, 31 August, the auspicious day of Janmashtami, began with ecstatic sankirtan by Gurumaharaj just after Mangala Arati, 'Jaya Dau, Jaya Dau', praying for the grace of Guru-Vaishnavas-Radha-Krishna. Later in the morning, Gurumaharaj gave a divine discourse on the essence of Janmashtami. He said that the pastimes of Supreme Lord are eternal. How is it so? He explained that there are two ways of understanding this, as explained by His Guruvarga-Vaishnavas. Firstly, as Supreme Lord is Infinite, His manifestations are also infinite. There exist infinite Vaikunthas and infinite Brahmandas (material cosmos). At one moment Supreme Lord appears in one material cosmos and the

in next moment in another. In this manner, His pastimes are going on and on eternally. Secondly, that Supreme Lord appears in the pure sanctified heart of a pure devotee. So His appearance is eternally taking place in the hearts of devotees.

Further Gurumaharaj explained that when Supreme Lord appears in the heart of a devotee, transcendental qualities of Supreme Lord are manifested in the devotee also, but such devotees are humble. When Kapil Bhagavan appeared before Mother Devahuti, she said that before His appearance she was in ignorance having desire for a son. Supreme Lord replied to her saying that how could He have appeared where there was ignorance or lust? Supreme Lord told Mother Devahuti that she didn’t have even the scent of such desires or ignorance. Devotees are humble by nature as they are associating with Absolute, Complete Reality- Supreme Lord. If Supreme Lord is to descend or appear, there cannot be any material desire or ulterior motive present there. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had handed over Transcendental Divine Love to goddess of river Padma for Narottam Thakur. Later when Narottam Thakur appeared and got that transcendental divine love from her, instantly his mood and feelings were totally changed. He became completely immersed in ocean of ecstatic bliss. In spite of being the only son of a king, he immediately renounced all material possessions and left for Vrindavana crying and calling out ‘Krishna! Krishna!’ in ‘viraha’ separation grief. He became completely detached to worldly objects and didn’t take with him a single penny or even some food. He was just walking towards Vrindavan completely engrossed in the thoughts of Krishna. He got blisters in his feet and became very weak. When he fell unconscious, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, long after His disappearance, came there in the form of a Brahmin and gave Narottam Thakur some milk. But he was too weak to even drink that milk. Then Sri Rupa Goswami Sri Sanatan Goswami, also much after their disappearance, appeared there and fed that milk to Srila Narottam Thakur. No material barrier can stop the grace of Guru and Vaishnavas. If we are sincere and actually want Their grace, we shall get it.

Srila Gurumaharaj said that Paramhansa Vamsi Das Babaji Maharaj, on being asked that how can we attain Supreme Lord, did not give long lectures etc., but said only one word- ‘rona’— ‘by weeping’. Do we have this sort of extreme eagerness and perturbation of heart to attain Supreme Lord? Only by the association and service of pure devotees, who have got such severe separation grief for Supreme Lord, this feeling can be imparted in us.

After the delightful discourse, devotees had the opportunity to hear Srimad Bhagavat Katha (10th Canto), throughout the day, from several other sannyasis of the Math. In the evening, after all devotees participated in Arati darshan Sree Guru-Gauranga-Radha-Nayananathji and circumambulation of the temple, the spiritual meeting was held under the kind guidance of Srila Gurumaharaj. He enlightened the devotees about Krishna-tattva and the infinite transcendental qualities of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. He said that Supreme Lord, His qualities, associates, abode etc. all are infinite and thus are incomprehensible for the finite sense-organs, mind and intellect, as substantiated by pastimes of Lord Brahma in Srimad Bhagavatam.

The listeners were spell-bounded by the charming narration of the sweet pastimes of Krishna such as killing of Putna, Shakat-Bhanjan, lifting of Goverdhan Mountain, mother Yashoda binding Krishna etc. Gurumaharaj said that such amount of bliss and sweetness is not present in any other Avatara (incarnation) of Supreme Lord. All delightful love-relations are there with Krishna. In Bhagavatam, after narration of all avatars (incarnations), Krishna has been declared as ‘Svayam Bhagavan’, ‘Original Supreme Lord Himself’.

From 11 pm to midnight, Srila Gurumaharaj narrated and explained the topic of appearance of Supreme Lord Sree Krishna from 10th Canto, Srimad Bhagvatam. He said that only the ears of a surrendered devotee, inclined to serve Sri Krishna, could do actual hearing of Hari-Katha. It is never possible to have contact with the Transcendental Reality- Supreme Lord, Who is All-Existence, All-Knowledge and All-Bliss, by the process of ascension. Only through the process of dissension and surrender, the Transcendental Name, Form, Attributes and Pastimes of Supreme Lord can be realised.

After the divine appearance of Supreme Lord Sree Krishna at 12 midnight, Abhishek ceremony of the Deity of Krishna and then Bhoga Arati were performed. Then at the end of the celebrations, Prasad was distributed to all the devotees at 2 am. Several devotees, along with Srila Gurumaharaj did nirjala fast on the auspicious day. At about 2:30 am, Srila Gurumaharaj was taking Prasad and devotees were eagerly waiting to be blessed with His Mahaprasad on this most auspicious tithi.

Next day also, thousands of devotees would participate and take prasad in Sree Nandotsav Festival.

Ordinary usual meaning

Guru :- Spiritual Master (Acharya), Preceptor, Professor or Lecturer, Advisor, Teacher, Instructor, Initiator.

Our Requirement Is Krsna-Prema

We belong to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu’s school of thought: pure devotion to Sri Krsna. What are the teachings of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu? One renowned saint, Srinatha Cakravarti, has summarized the teachings of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu in a nutshell, in this verse:

aradhyo bhagavan vrajesa-tanayas tad-dhama
vrndavanam ramya kacid upasana vraja-vadhi-
vargena ya kalpita
Srimad-bhagvatam pramanam amalam prema pumartho
mahan Sri caitanya-mahaprabhur matam idam
tatradaro nah parah

(from Caitanya-manjusa, a commentary on Srimad Bhagavatam)

"aradhyo bhagavan vrajesa-tanayas": Caitanya Mahaprabhu has taught us to worship Krsna, the son of Nanda Maharaja. According to Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Krsna, the son of Nanda Maharaja, is the highest object of worship—the Supreme Lord. "Tad-dhama vrndavana": His transcendental, spiritual realm is Vrndavana. What form of bhakti is foremost there? The vraja-gopis, or milk women of Vraja-manтala, worship Sri Krsna with all their senses and all the objects of their senses. Their worship is unparalleled. No one

else can worship in such a manner, as do the vraja-gopis. You will find this evidence in the quintessence of all scriptures, Srimad Bhagavatam. What is the ultimate goal of human life? Krsna-prema.
Dharma, artha, kama and moksa are not the ultimate targets for human beings. "Dharma" means performing many actions, for our own worldly benefit here and hereafter, as per the instructions of the scriptures. That dharma performed with the aim of receiving benefit in this world, in other worlds or after death is not our ultimate goal of life. "Artha" means to amass money and "kama" means to fulfill our sensual desires. These are not the ultimate goals of a human being. Even moksa, deliverance from the cycle of births and deaths, is not our ultimate goal. A prisoner may be released from prison but, after that, what does he get? A prisoner may be granted deliverance or emancipation but, if after that he gets nothing, if he does not become rich, what is his situation? He is free, but what does he have? At first, he was in an undesirable state, in bondage. Now he is released from bondage, but what is he getting after he is released? It is an important point. So, merely getting deliverance from the cycles of maya cannot be the ultimate goal. After that, what shall we get? Love of God— krsna-prema. That is wealth. If I become released from my debts, that does not mean that I have become rich. I was in debt for the sum of one million dollars and then I paid it back. I can be said to be rich only to the extent of what I may receive after that debt is paid. So, when we get positive things, such as love for Krsna, that is called "wealth." That is our requirement: krsna-prema.

Pastimes of Mahaprabhu with Sree Sridhar Pandita

One of the twelve Gopals in Krishna Lila was named Kusumasava. He appeared in Gaura lila as Sridhara Pandit, who was given the nickname khola-becha, "bark-seller".

The Supreme Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu showed the charming pastime of hungrily taking Sridhar's foodstuffs without being invited to do so. While the

Lord was still a student, Sridhar used to make his living by selling banana flowers (mocha) and the core of banana plant (thora). He would then spend half of whatever little money he made in this way on worshiping the Ganges, the other half on his own necessities. Like Yudhisthira, he was a great devotee of the truth and would always tell the real price of the items sold. Everyone in Nabadvipa knew this and so would not haggle with him. But Mahaprabhu would come to Sridhar and give him only half the amount he was asking for his bananas, banana flower or thora and then walk off with them. Every day, the two of them would pull back and forth on a bunch of bananas or something else, arguing for an hour or more over the price that was to be paid.

Every day they would argue for an hour and a half; then finally Mahaprabhu would walk away with the goods, leaving only half the asked price. Sridhar would always tell the truth and give the real price of each item, but the Lord would still only give him half the amount he asked for and then take it. Sridhar would jump up and grab the item, trying to take it back, even pushing and shoving the Lord.

Even though the Lord argued with Sridhar, He only took his ware when He saw that Sridhar was not angry. From a superficial point of view, it appears that Mahaprabhu was mistreating Sridhar by stealing from him, but the fact of the matter is that Sridhar allowed Him to get away with it. Upon seeing the Lord's beauty, he would become completely enchanted and immersed in an ocean of joy, so how could he get angry with Him? While arguing with Sridhar, Mahaprabhu would delight in calling him names and insulting him, and sometimes even hinted at His own divine identity:

"Every day you buy things to offer to the Ganges. Why don't you just give something to Me without charging anything? Don't you know that I am the father of the Ganges you worship? I assure you that this is the absolute truth!"

They finally came to a settlement and Sridhar agreed to daily give Mahaprabhu some bananas or other items from the banana tree for free. From then on, the Lord daily ate with great satisfaction from the little bowls made of banana bark given him by Sridhar.

The Lord said, "Very well. There is no reason for you to give me something else." And from that day on, He ate with great contentment on the banana leaves Sridhar had given Him. The Lord thus eats anything that the devotee offers Him,

but rejects even luxurious items given Him by a non-devotee.

Prabhupada's Final Instructions

On the disappearance day of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur (13 Dec 2003). The following is an excerpt from the book "Sri Chaitanya: His Life and Associates" by Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj.

On December 27, 1936, several days prior to the setting of the blazing sun of the Gaudiya Vaishnava sampradaya, Om Vishnupada Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur, he spoke to an gathering of his closest disciples, at which time he said the following words:

“I have disturbed many people because I felt myself obliged to speak the unadulterated truth. I have told everyone to worship Hari without hypocrisy and because of this some people have perhaps considered me to be their enemy. So I have caused many people anxiety by telling them to give up other desires and hypocrisy and to sincerely serve Krishna. Some day they will be able to understand what I was getting at.

“All of you please preach the message of Rupa and Raghunath with great enthusiasm. The ultimate object of our desires is to become specks of dust at the lotus feet of the followers of Rupa Goswami. Remain united in following the asraya-vigraha in order to satisfy the transcendental senses of the one, non-dual supreme truth. Make your way through this impermanent, transitory life in whatever way you can, keeping the goal of worshiping the Lord foremost in your minds. Don’t abandon this goal, even in the face of hundreds of dangers, insults, or persecutions. Don’t lose your spirit if you see that the majority of people cannot accept the principle of selfless service to the Supreme Lord. Never abandon your bhajana, hearing and chanting Krishna-katha, the be-all

and end-all of your devotional life. Please always chant the name of the Lord, being humbler than a blade of grass and more tolerant than the tree.

“This body is like the aging cow which in ancient times was meant to be offered up in sacrifice. Only we desire to offer the body to Krishna in the sacrifice of the Holy Name established by Sri Krishna Chaitanya and his associates. We do not seek to become heroes performing great works or religious deeds; our true being and our identity is that of a speck of dust at the lotus feet of Sri Rupa Prabhu, life after life. The stream which flows from Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur will never be dammed up. Remember this and vow to double your efforts to fulfill Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur’s desires. Amongst you are many capable and worthy individuals. We seek nothing for ourselves; our only motto is:

adadanas trnam dantair idam yace punah
punah | *srimad rupa-padambhoja-dhulh syam*
janma-janmani ||

Taking grass between my teeth, I pray repeatedly that I may become a speck of dust at Sri Rupa Goswami’s lotus feet, birth after birth. (Raghunath Das Goswami, Muktacarita.)

“While living in the world, we encounter many difficulties; but there is no need for us to be bewildered by these difficulties -- nor need we make any effort to remove them. What is necessary is for us, while we are still here, is to learn what will remain after we have removed all those difficulties -- what will be the nature of our eternal life. There are so many things which we want or don’t want, but we have to come to terms with this duality of attractions and repulsions. The more we distance ourselves from Krishna’s lotus feet, the

more these things will draw us in. We can only begin to comprehend the exquisite taste of service to Krishna’s lotus feet after transcending these worldly attractions and repulsions and being attracted by his holy name. The doctrines of Krishna-bhakti seem startling at first, perhaps even perplexing. Knowingly or unknowingly, every human being is struggling to eliminate the adventitious elements in life which interfere with his direct experience of

eternal fulfillment. Our only obligation is to go beyond duality and to enter the world of that eternal fulfillment.

“We have no attachment for anyone in this world, nor any hostility. Whatever arrangements we make in this world last but a moment, while the need to search out the supreme fulfillment is equally unavoidable for everyone. May all of you work united and in harmony toward the same goal: to earn the right to serve the root asraya-vigraha. May the current of ideas propagated by Rupa Goswami flow throughout the world. May we never under any circumstances become indifferent to the seven-tongued sacrificial flame of the Holy Name. If our attraction to it remains ever-increasing, we will achieve all perfection. Remain faithful to Rupa Goswami’s followers and preach Rupa and Raghunath’s teachings enthusiastically and fearlessly.”

Praying for the grace of Most revered Gurudev Srila Bhakti Dayita Madhav Goswami Maharaj on His holy appearance

Tenth in line from Sri Chaitanya, Paramahamsa Parivrajakacarya Om 108 Sri Srimad Bhakti Dayita Madhava Goswami Maharaj Vishnupada, one of the dearest associates of Om 108 Sri Srimad Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur Prabhupada was the founder of the Chaitanya Gaudiya Math throughout India and my own spiritual master. He appeared as a baby in this world at 8:00 A.M. on Friday, Agrahayan 3, 1311 (Bengali), or November 18, 1904, Utthana-ekadasi, in the village of Kancana-paåa in the Madaripur subdivision of Faridpur district in East Bengal.

His grandfather was named Caëòiprasada Devasarma Bandyopadhyaya, his father Nisikanta. They lived in the village of Bharakara in the precinct of Öangibaåi in the Vikramapura subdivision of Òhaka district. Srila Gurudeva’s mother was Saibalini Devi. Srila Gurudeva lost his father at the age of four, after which his mother took him and returned to her brothers’ home which is where he was raised. The name given him by his father was Sri Heramba Kumara

Bandyopadhyaya, but he was known by his nickname Ganesa.

From a very early age, Srila Gurudeva began to display extraordinary qualities. He would never under any circumstances tell a lie. Even when very young, Srila Gurudeva showed little interest in materialistic enjoyments. He used to lead an orderly and disciplined life and encouraged the other children to do so. Whenever Srila Gurudev's mother gave him some special delicacy or sweet, he would only eat whatever was left after he had called his friends and distributed it amongst them.

At school, his teachers were astonished to hear him say things which showed a level of wisdom beyond his years. Srila Gurudeva ran quickly and took the lead in a race, but tripped on a root and fell with great force, causing him to bleed profusely. When his schoolteachers and other guardians approached to pacify him, he answered, "You need not worry on my account. I will quickly get better. I could have injured my eyes, ears or broken my nose, but nothing serious like that happened." When the school teachers heard him say these things, they immediately realized that he was no ordinary child.

Srila Gurudeva was a natural leader at all ages. There was no area in which he did not excel.

Srila Gurudeva read the Bhagavad-gita daily, so that by the age of eleven, he had memorized the entire 700 verses of the text.

While in Calcutta he began to feel great separation from the Supreme Lord. He stayed with a relative named Narayan Candra Mukhopadhyaya who later took sannyas from him and was given the name Bodhayana Maharaj. Narayan Candra recounted that he often saw Srila Gurudeva calling out the names of the Lord and crying in the middle of the night. He would eat only havisyanna (an unspiced khichuri) once a day. In this state of absorption in the Lord, he one day had a dream in which Narada Muni came and reassured him. Narada gave him a mantra and told him that by chanting it he would achieve all perfection. However, upon awakening, try as he might Srila Gurudeva was unable to recall the mantra he had been given in its entirety. The loss of the mantra bewildered and distressed him immeasurably. His irritation with life in the household reached an intolerable degree and he became determined to abandon it. With this idea in mind, he went to ask the blessings of his widowed mother. She made no effort to oppose his wishes. So, with an intense desire to have a vision of the

Supreme Lord, Srila Gurudeva set off for the Himalayas.

Srila Gurudeva's passionate desire for the Lord brought him first to Haridvara and from there into the mountains. High up in the Himalayan jungle, he fasted for three days from food and water, all the time anxiously calling out to the Lord.

Srila Gurudeva came to visit Mayapur for the first time with his childhood friend Narayan Candra Mukhopadhyäya and some other people. There they saw Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur and were attracted by his superhuman personality. Srila Prabhupada said during a lecture they attended that it was alright to visit the deity form in the temple, but that one had to learn to see it first. One cannot really see it with eyes that are blinded by material desire, but only with the eyes of love. On the same day, Dr. S. N. Ghosh and his wife were initiated by Srila Prabhupada.

He took shelter of Srila Prabhupada and on September 4, 1927, on Radhasöami, received initiation in the Holy Name and mantra at the Ultadanga Math. After initiation he was known as Hayagriva Das Brahmachari.

Not long after being initiated, Srila Gurudeva decided to commit himself completely to the service of Krishna and his devotees by moving into the Math. He thus took the great vow of remaining a lifelong celibate or naisthika-brahmacari. It was not long before Srila Gurudeva was counted amongst Srila Prabhupada's leading disciples as a result of his dedicated service to his guru, his unflagging enthusiasm and his competence in a variety of services. Srila Prabhupada used the words "volcanic energy" to describe Srila Gurudeva's unflinching resolve to accomplish the tasks given him, his application and his success in all endeavors.

On the 457th anniversary of Mahaprabhu's appearance, on the Phalguni Purnima of 1944, at the age of 40, he took sannyas on the grounds of the Öoöa Gopinath temple from H. H. Bhakti-gaurava Vaikhanasa Maharaj according to the Vaishnava rituals. He was thenceforth known as Parivrajakacarya Tridaëòi-svami Srimad Bhakti-dayita Madhava Goswami Maharaj.

Srila Prabhupada was eager to preach Mahaprabhu's message in the western world and had decided to send Srila Gurudeva, as he was competent for the mission. Srila Gurudeva and two others had their photos taken and passports made in preparation for the trip. When everything was ready, Rajarsi Saradindu

Narayan Ray said to Srila Prabhupada, “England is a land full of heavenly nymphs. I don’t think it is a good idea to send handsome young men there to preach. You should rather send a more aged disciple.” Srila Prabhupada thought that the suggestion of Rajarsi Saradindu Narayan was not without foundation and decided to send H. H. Bhakti-pradipa Tirtha Maharaj in Srila Gurudeva’s place. He instructed Srila Gurudeva to collect money for the preaching mission.

Srila Gurudeva was afraid that Srila Prabhupada would not remain in the world much longer and had been worried that if sent to England he may never see him again. He was thus relieved when on the advice of the Rajarsi Srila Prabhupada changed his mind about sending him there.

Press Release

Mumbai. 29th December, 2000.

[The Statement of His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj, the President Acharya of Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Math (Regd.) Organisation]

According to Lord Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Transcendental Divine Love is the strongest spiritual force on earth which can establish close relation of love and unity of hearts amongst all human beings and thereby establish real peace in the world. There is an outbreak of conflagration of group clashes throughout the world. Nowhere you will find peace. I am worried to read in newspapers the news of bomb explosions and disturbances. A section of people have become so violent and barbarous that they do not hesitate in committing heinous crimes in assassinating innocent persons to fulfill their political ends.
All humanitarian considerations have been relinquished. They are now seeking justifications in committing such great sins.

When there are different centers of interests, nobody can avoid clashing of individuals, groups, nations etc. As for example, if circles are drawn with different centers, circumferences will cross, but if there is one center of interest there may be smaller or bigger circles but there will be no crossing. According to Lord Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu there should be knowledge of the real self, real interest and one center of interest. Supreme Lord Sree Krishna who is Achyuta* can only be the common center of interest from whom all the spirit souls have emanated.

If we pour water at the root of the tree, whole tree is nourished with all its parts, in like manner, by serving Krishna we serve all. Non-Violence is to refrain from doing injury to others – it is negative, but love is to do positive good to others. If anybody has got pure love to any person, he cannot have the impetus to inflict injuries to any part of the object of his love. If we get love for Krishna, we cannot have the impetus to inflict injuries to any of His parts emanating from His marginal potency. All Jivas** are interrelated through their relation to Sree Krishna.

Lord Krishna has said in the Bhagvat Gita (18.62) “O son of Bharat, Surrender unto Him utterly. By His Grace you will attain Transcendental peace and Supreme and eternal abode.” Complete unconditional surrender to the Lotus Feet of Supreme Lord Sree Krishna can only bestow on us eternal peace. The moment we shall submit to Sree Krishna unconditionally, our all ills and sufferings will go. ‘Sharanagati ‘ is the best medicine for cure of all afflictions and the solution of all problems. False egos create false interests and by that clashing of interests we see the forest fire in this world. Supreme Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has said, if individual spirit souls can have the knowledge that they are interrelated with love relation, this forest fire of clashing of interests will stop. So Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has said, Divine Love is the best and only solution of the disturbed situation of the world. That Divine Love (Prema-Bhakti) for the Supreme Lord can be cultivated by ‘Nama-Sankirtan’ –chanting of the Holy Name of Supreme Lord, viz. Krishna, Rama, Govinda, Madhava, etc.

In the present age, ‘Nama-Sankirtan’ is the best medicine and effective way to achieve the summum bonum of human life as it can be performed under any sort of circumstances.
Nama-Samkirtan is a universal religion under whose banner people of all sects and rank can unite. Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Math institution is engaged in the propagation of the all- embracing doctrine of Transcendental Divine Love of Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to counter the present trend of violence and

cruelty and to bring unity of hearts amongst all irrespective of caste, creed and religion. Yours in the service of Supreme Lord,

*Achyuta:-(nobody can be detached from Him) – All Unifying Spiritual Principle

**Jivas:- Individual Conscious Units

Puri Rath-Yatra, 2002

In Kathopnishad, it is written that this body is the Chariot. A suitable boat to cross the ocean of births and deaths. The mind is the reign or bridle to control the horses, the senses. The intellect (wisdom) is the charioteer. Atma (the soul) is the owner of the chariot.In Gita Lord Sri Krishna says, To those who are constantly devoted and worship Me with love, I give understandingby which tnhey can come to Me.

In the run-up to Rath yatra, a procession was taken out by the devotees from the birth-site of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur Prabhupad. On way to Gundicha Mandir, dancing and chanting along with devotees, His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj, WHO WAS LEADING THE Sankirtan-procession, stopped for offering obeisance at Sri Jagannath Vallabh Vatika, where he elaborated on Rathyatra, as given above.

Then at Gundicha, all were thrilled with the loud chants of Hare Krishna! It was like power cleansing of the mind.

Explaing the significance, Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj said that one who is blessed by Lord Jagannath, can come to participate here. Supreme Lord has got affection for all. His affection for us equals billions of parents! Whosoever sees Jagannathdeva in the chariot, is rescued from this cycle of births and deaths.

When we do not want His grace, we say, He is not kind to me. We

blame others, thinking ourselves to be alright.

Those who have eagerness to serve, get His support. When we want His service, He supports. But we do not want His service, we want to enjoy! Look into your heart, whether you want His service or...

Even the trees engaged for the making of the Ratha, are rescued by the Lord. Being immobile living beings,trees are unable to render a direct service. If they are put in service, their life is successful. Everything is from Jagannathdeva, in Him and it should remain for Him. A Service cannot go futile.

Lord Jagannath is appearing eternally in the hearts of the pure devotees. I have appeared, extending His both hands to embrace all, but His darshan is possible only with the eyes of love.

There is no place for Laxmi Devi in Gundicha Mandir, where Lord will stay.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu took all devotees to cleanse the Gundicha, a day before the Rath yatra. This is to clear your heart for God to appear. If our desires are removed, then the heart becomes sanctified. In a sanctified heart, Lord of the Universe Sri Jagannath appears!

Rathyatra signifies the desire of the Gopis to take Sri Krishna from Kurukshetra to Vrindavana. Original Rath Yatra was started by Indradyumna Mahara in Satya-Yuga. There is an evidence in the scriptures that Prahlad Maharaj had drawn the Ratha.

In Puri there are 62 festivals throughout the year. Rath Yatra is most attractive. It begins with the Chandan Yatra on Akshaya-Trtiya, then Snan-Yatra then Gundicha Marjan and culminates in Rath-Yatra.

Q: Whether *** may work in a medicine drug factory where animal products are treated and there is apprehension of bad smell etc.

Answer of Srila Gurudeva:
There is apprehension of contamination of animal propensity by taking such animal product drugs. That contamination may spoil our mind whether we take directly or indirectly. Previously in India, treatment with most effective result was done by drugs from herbs or trees, for all kinds of diseases but due to alien influence in India for hundreds of years that Ayurvedic treatment has got deterioration in capacity due to want of knowledge of different herbs. Western type systems of treatment are more prevailing now, which are more inclined to make medicine from animals. If they can use Ayurvedic medicine, it is better. We are enslaved jivas, we have imbibed propensity of taking animal products. If we will increase it, it will be derogatory to spiritual upliftment. On Ekadasi Tithi if one is seriously ill, he is allowed to take medicine for survival but that medicine should not be animal product. Even now in India many persons do not take meat and fish, so vegetarian doctors prescribe vegetarian diets to the patients and non-vegetarian doctors, as per their aptitude, prescribe non-vegetarian diets. I have seen in Newspapers that many persons now in western countries prefer vegetarian diet. The number of people taking to vegetarianism is increasing. According to them non-vegetarian diet causes many diseases.

Qualities of a bonafide Guru

Guravo bahabah santi sisyavittapaharakah
Durlabhah sadgururdevi, sisyasantapaharkah

Mahadeva's instruction to Parvati - 'There may be many so called gurus in this world to squeeze money from disciples, but a Bonafide Guru who can remove the drawbacks and sufferings of disciples is very rare'. If we want quality, we cannot get quantity. If we are keen to increase quantity, we shall have to sacrifice quality. Who is Bonafide Guru? What are the characteristics of a Bonafide Guru?

Prabuddha Muni's instructions in regard to this -

tasmad gurum prapadyeta
jijnasuh sreya uttamam
sabde pare ca nisnatam
brahmanyupasamasrayam
(SB 11 / 3 / 21)

"Therefore, enquire Gurudeva about the best eternal welfare with complete submission to Him. A Bonafide Guru is endowed with two special qualities: 1) He is well-versed in authentic scriptures and 2) has realisation of Divinity".

sabde brahmani vede veda-tatparyya-jnapake sastrantare ca nisnatam nipunam, anyatha sisyasya samsaya-cchedabhave vaimanasya ca sati kasyacit sraddha-saithilyam api sambhavet. pare brahmani ca nisnatam aparoksanubhava-samartham, anyatha tat-kripa samyak phalavati na syat. para-brahma-nisnatatva-dyotakam aha, - upasam asrayam krodha-lobhady-avasibhutam

Sreela Vishvanath Chakravarty in his commentary explained the characteristics of a Bonafide Guru. Gurudeva should be well-versed in the Vedas and other allied scriptures. An aspirant disciple cannot progress in his worship of God without taking shelter of a really qualified Bonafide Guru, who should have the capacity of removing the doubts of disciples by reasoning substantiated with evidence from authentic scriptures. If Gurudeva is incapable of removing the doubts of the disciple, the disciple's belief in Him may slacken. The second characteristic of Gurudeva is that He should have realisation of the Divinity. Only by theoretical knowledge of the scriptures, without having practical realisation, Spiritual Guide cannot give proper advice and direction in accordance to the eligibility of the disciple. By the instruction of a Guru possessing the quality of practical realisation, the disciple can have actual spiritual progress. It is to be considered here, a disciple can have the capacity to comprehend scriptural knowledge of Gurudeva by hearing from Him; but how can a disciple understand whether Gurudeva has got realisation of Divinity or not? Supreme Lord is Transcendental Reality, His Absolute Counterpart Gurudeva is also Transcendental. Therefore, a neophyte votary cannot understand Gurudeva's realisation of Divinity by his own endeavour.

There are two aspects of Supreme Lord and His Absolute Counterpart Gurudeva - (1) morphological aspect and (2) ontological aspect. Conditioned souls can by

their mind, intellect and sense-organs grasp the morphological, i.e. the external aspect of the thing - thing as it appears - and not the thing as it is. The thing as it is, can be realised only by the grace of Transcendental Realities, through unconditional complete surrender. As for example the self-luminous sun can only be known by it's own light and not by the help of other lights. We cannot see sun in the night with the help of other lights, but when sun rises, by accepting the grace of the sun-it's light- we can see the sun and all things of this world in the proper perspective. Supreme Lord and His Absolute Counterpart Gurudeva are self-effulgent. Sree Vishwanath Chakravarty Thakur, in his commentary, has given to the bonafide neophyte aspirants, a clue to recognise Guru by one external quality - a Bonafide Guru is not subdued by passions - anger, greed etc.

Of course, realised soul can use the passions for the service of Supreme Lord and for the eternal benefit of conditioned souls, but He can never be subjugated by them. Sree Narottam Thakur has advised us how the cardinal passions can be used for the service of Sree Krishna, except for malice - *'Kama krisna-karam-arpane, krodha bhaktadvesijane, lobha sadhusange harikatha, moha ista-labhavine, mada krisnagungane niyukta kariba yatha tatha'*. Kama - passion for fulfillment of desires should be diverted to desire to serve Krishna, 'anger' should be used against those who are hostile to devotees, 'greed' should be employed to increase the desire to hear Hari-Katha from a bonafide sadhu, 'infatuation' should be over not being able up till now to utilise the valuable time of this precious human birth for worship of Sree Krishna and 'madness' should be after singing the glories of Sree Krishna. Even Narada Goswami, out of compassion, used anger on the sons of Kuber- Nalkuber and Manigriva- to rescue them. According to Gita, the cause of anger is obstruction to fulfillment of one's desire. A real devotee cannot have any desire of his own except service of Sree Krishna. So, in a pure devotee, there cannot be any possibility of the origination of such anger due to hindrance to worldly desires.

It is essential for the votary to submit to Gurudeva wholeheartedly with words, mind, sense-organs and everything, for realisation of Divinity. Evidence- Mundaka Sruti:-

Pariksa lokan karma-citan brahmano
Nirvedamayannastyakritah kritena
tad-vijnanartham sa gurumevabhigacchet
samit-panih srotriyam brahma-nistham

(Mundaka Sruti 1 / 2 / 12)

A brahmin should have the knowledge that the fruits of Karma are non-eternal and Eternal Reality cannot be attained by karma. As such a brahmin has no attachment to karma and therefore, he takes absolute shelter at the Lotus Feet of a Bonafide Guru. Two characteristics of Bonafide Guru are mentioned in Mundaka Sruti- 'Srotriyam' and 'Brahma-Nistham'. Interpretations of the word 'Srotriyam -(1) Well-versed in Sruti sastras - the Vedas and other allied scriptures and (2) blessed by the descent of the Divine knowledge through preceptorial channel.

Supreme Lord is Transcendental and beyond comprehension of human intellect, mind and sense-organs. He is 'Asamorddhva', i.e. there is no one equal to Him or more than Him. So, His grace is the only means of getting Him. At the beginning of creation, when Brahma originated from the navel of Supreme Lord, Supreme Lord imparted Divine knowledge to him out of compassion.

jnanam parama-guhyam me
yad vijnana-samanvitam
sarahasyam tad-angam ca
grihana gaditam maya
(SB 2. 9. 30)

'I tell you the most secret of all secrets for esoteric realisation of Divinity. Accept it and practice different forms of devotion to get the objective'.

Brahma, after realisation, imparted that Divine knowledge to Narada Goswami and Narada Goswami to Vyas Deva - in this way the knowledge of Divinity is extended through preceptorial channel or disciplic channel. Sree Amarartha Chandrika has interpreted the word 'Amnaya' as 'Sampradaya'. The etymological meaning of 'Sampradaya' is Divine Knowledge descending through bonafide preceptorial channel where sanctity of knowledge is correctly and completely retained. Nowadays due to prostitution of language, 'Sampradaya' is misinterpreted as 'sectarianism'.

sampradaya-vihina ye mantras te nisphala matah
sadhanaughair na sidhyanti, koti-kalpa-satair api
atah kalau bhavisyanti, catvarah sampradayainah
sri-brahma-rudra-sanaka, vaisnavah ksiti-pavanah

(Padma Purana)

All mantras without connection to 'Sampradaya', or not received through preceptorial channel, are fruitless. Practise of such mantras for millions and millions of years will be in vain. Therefore, four bonafide sampradayas in this Kaliyuga (black age)-- 'Shree' (Lakshmi), 'Brahma', 'Rudra' and 'Sanak'- have appeared to rescue the fallen souls. It is stated in 'Premeya Ratnavali', written by Sree Baladeva Vidyabhushan Prabhu that 'Shree', i.e. 'Lakshmi Devi' has accepted 'Ramanuja' (other names- Ramanandi or Ramait), Brahma has accepted Madhvacharya (another name- Madhvi), 'Rudra'-Visnuswami (other names- Vallabhacharya or Vallabhi) and 'Chatuhson' (other names- Sanak, Sanandan, Sanatan and Sanatkumar) -- Nimbaditya (other names- Nimat or Nimbarka or Nimanandi) as Acharyas of the respective sampradayas. "Sree 'Brahma' Sampradaya is the preceptorial channel of the devout devotees of Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. In conformity to this preceptorial channel, Sree Kavi Karnapur Goswami has determined 'Guru-Pranali' (succession of Gurus) in his own writing - Gaur-Ganadesha Dipika". Sree Baladeva Vidyabhushan, commentator of Vedanta-Sutra, has firmly corroborated this. Those who disown this Guru-Pranali, are considered to be the greatest foes against the verdict of Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's followers and personal associates.

Acceptance of the system of bonafide sampradaya is absolutely necessary. Therefore, from ancient times, this acceptance of the system of bonafide sampradaya is very acutely followed by sadhus. Those who have understood the significance of the teachings of the Vedas through preceptorial channel from Brahma, have accepted this perfect representation. Others, having diverted from this opinion, have become the slaves of various blasphemous atheistic views"

Sree Bhakti Vinod Vani Vaibhav Kavi Karnapur in his book Gaur-Ganadesh Dipika, has ascertained Guru Parampara (succession of Gurus) in this way :-

tatra maddhavisampradayah prastavadatra likhyate
parabrahmesvarasayasicchiyo jagatpatih

Parampara (preceptorial channel):- Brahma is the disciple of the Lord of Transcendental Realm. From Brahma, gradual succession - Narada - Vyas Deva - Madhvacharya - Padmanabhacharya - Narahari - Madhava - Akshobhya - Jayatirtha - Jnanasindhu - Mahanidhi - Vidyanidhi - Rajendra - Jayadharma - Purushottama - Vyasatirtha - Lakshmipati - Madhavendrapuri - Ishvarapuri -

Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Sreela Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur in his 'anubhasya' (commentary) on Sree Chaitanya Charitamrita, remembers Guru Parampara from Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and prays their grace as follows:-

mahaprabhu sri-caitanya, radha-krisna nahe anya,
rupanuga janera jivana
viswambhara priyankara, sri-swarupa damodara,
tara mitra rupa-sanatana,
rupa-priya mahajana, raghunatha bhaktadhana,
tara priya kavi krisnadasa,
krisnadasa-priya-bara, narottama seva-para,
jara pada viswanatha-asa,
bhaktaraja viswanatha, tahe sraddho jagannatha,
tara priya bhakativinoda,
maha-bhagavata-bara, sri-gaurakisora-bara,
hari-bhajanete ja'ra moda,
ei saba harijana, gaurangera nijajana,
tadera ucchiste yara kama,
sri-varsabhanavi-bara, sada sevya-seva-para,
tahara dayita-dasa-nama,
harijana-seva-asa, bhakti-vriddhi-abhilasa
pravaha-bhasyera anugata,
gaur-jana-sastra dekhi,' sei anusarya likhi,
'anubhasya' rupanuga mata

Srotriya, brahma-nishtha, mahabhagavat vaishnavs are 'Jagat Gurus' (Spiritual Guides of the whole world) for all time to come.

Qualities of a sadhu

Due to the desire of the devotees in the West and in India, and as per the order of my siksa guru, Param Pujyapada Puri Gosvami Maharaja, I have come out of India and traveled to many parts of the world. By the grace of my siksa guru, I am finding devotees everywhere. God has sent us to these places to get the company of the devotees there. By having the company of the devotees, we can get devotion to Supreme Lord Sri Krsna. "Bhaktistu bhagavada bhakta sangena parijayate." By associating with the pure devotee, you can get devotion to the Supreme Lord. There is no other way. By associating with the karmi, jnani or yogi, you cannot get devotion. A devotee may be in the ascetic or household order, but either way, if you keep company with the devotee, you can get devotion. Our most revered Guru Maharaja used to invite all the devotees, both ascetics and householders, to large spiritual conferences. So, we have also developed this aptitude for sadhu-sanga by observing him. We should serve and keep the company of devotees. Then we can achieve the objective-love for Krsna.

How can we recognize the suddha bhakta, the pure devotee? The signs, symptoms and attributes of the suddha bhakta have been elucidated in Caitanya Caritamrta. In this literature, Kaviraja Gosvami has narrated the life and precepts of Caitanya Mahaprabhu. In Madhya-lila, he has written, "It is very difficult to narrate all the qualities of a Vaisnava. So, I am giving only a general overview, a hint of this." He then mentions twenty-six special qualities of a suddha bhakta or sadhu:

krpalu, akrta-droha, satya-sara, sama
nidosa, vadanya, mrdu, suci, akincana
sarvopakaraka, santa, krsnaika-sarana
akama, aniha, sthira, vijita-sad-guna
mita-bhuk, apramatta, manada, amani
gambhira, karuna, maitra, kavi, daksa, mauni
(Madhya-lila, 22.78-80)

These are the twenty-six principle qualities. Can you understand this? Perhaps you might think that Svamiji has gone crazy. "What is this he is saying?" We cannot understand this. Even Bengalis will not be able to understand. If I speak to Bengalis in their native tongue, they will also be unable to understand this because this is something beyond this world. "What is this Svamiji speaking?"

they will think. What to speak of English speaking persons, a Bengali will not be able to understand this. When I first heard such terminology, I also did not understand. When our Guru Maharaja came to our village, my younger brother informed me that a hari-sabha, a huge Vaisnava meeting, was taking place. All the distinguished persons of the town were present. When I arrived, the site was fully packed with people-mostly lawyers. My uncle, who was also a lawyer, was there. My friend, who was the son of a government lawyer, also came with me. Our Guru Maharaja was addressing the gathering and we listened. I could not understand anything. I just looked at him. We had never heard such words at our homes or our schools and colleges. "What is this he is saying?" we thought. "This 'antaranga-sakti', 'bahiranga-sakti', 'tatastha-sakti', internal potency, external potency, marginal potency--what is all this?" I did not understand anything at first. Now, I have been at the Math for some time, so I have become acquainted with these words. At first, when I heard Guru Maharaja, I simply looked at him, without understanding. The only thing I understood was that Guru Maharaja was a great teacher, a great personality and that he was a krsna-bhakta. He advised us to perform worship of Krsna. I thought, "I want to worship Krsna, so I should go there to the Math to get krsna-bhakti." That much I had understood, and nothing else. How can we come to understand?

"Krpalu": The sadhu should be compassionate. One symptom of the sadhu is that he tries to remove the difficulties, the miseries, of the conditioned souls of this world. That is the nature of the sadhu. He is always compassionate and kind to all jivas.

"Akrta-droha": If anybody does any harm to him, the sadhu does not retaliate. He tolerates it. By this behavior, we can understand whether or not he is a sadhu. "I will become furious if anybody does any injury to me! I shall retaliate and teach him a lesson!" If a person thinks like this, then he is not a sadhu. In a sadhu, the tendency of retaliation toward hostility is absent.

"Satya-sara": Truthfulness (satya) is the sole object of his life (sara). He cannot speak lies.

"Sama": Sadhus are equal and impartial to all.

"Nidosa": Sadhus are faultless. You cannot find any fault in them.

"Vadanya": They are bountiful and munificent. Their hearts are magnanimous.

"Mrdu": They are of mild temperament. Sadhus never become harsh. They are very mild. "If anyone says something against me, I will become furious and speak harsh words." Sadhus cannot speak like this.

"Suci": Sadhus are pure.

"Akincana": They have no desires of this world.

"Sarvopakaraka": They do good to all the living beings of the world.

"Santa": As they have no desires, their minds are always restful-calm and quiet. When we have desires that we cannot fulfill, we become disturbed. But the sadhus have no desires, so they are calm and quiet. If anybody comes in contact with them, that person will also become calm and quiet. Why? Because of "krsnaika-sarana".

"Krsnaika-sarana": This is the original quality of the sadhu. God is the embodiment of all qualities--infinite, transcendental qualities. When you worship the Supreme Lord with devotion, these qualities will descend to you. You can get these qualities. So, this original quality of the sadhu means that he has taken absolute shelter of Supreme Lord Sri Krsna--absolute shelter.

The discussion between Kapiladeva and Devahuti in the Third Canto of Srimad Bhagavatam illustrates this. Mother Devahuti was asking questions and Kapila Bhagavan was answering her. Mother Devahuti, the consort of Kardama Rsi, prayed to her husband, "Please give me a son! Without a son, my life is futile." Then Kardama Rsi told her, "If you want a son, then I shall leave and go to the forest. Choose which one you want-me or a son." Devahuti became puzzled and remained silent. But after some time, she again appealed to her husband, "Without a son, I cannot be happy. Please give me a son." Repeatedly, Devahuti prayed to her husband for a son. Finally, Kardama Rsi instructed her, "We must perform penance, as per my direction. Then, by the grace of the Lord, you will get a son." Thus, he and his wife both embarked on the performance of immense penance together.

Observing the strong desire and penance of Kardama Rsi and Mother Devahuti, God Himself made up His mind to appear there as their Son. He appeared first in the heart of Kardama Rsi. Then, Kardama Rsi imparted knowledge of that

Divinity to his wife by diksa initiation, and that same Divinity entered into her heart. Eventually, at the auspicious time, the Supreme Lord entered into Mother Devahuti's womb. After that, all the demigods came to know of the imminent appearance of Bhagavan and came to offer prayers to her womb. Afterward, Brahma came to Mother Devahuti and told her, "Mother, God is appearing as your Son. Do not think Him to be a human being." After alerting her, Brahma and the other demigods left.

On the auspicious day, Bhagavan Kapila appeared. Just after His appearance, He assumed the padma-asana, the yogic lotus sitting posture, on the bank of Bindu Sarovar. Upon seeing this, Mother Devahuti was astonished. "No child can sit like this as soon as he is born! What is this? Oh! Brahma told me that I should not think my Son to be a human being. God has appeared!" Then she made obeisances to Kapila Bhagavan, saying, "For so long I have been entangled in worldly desires! Therefore, I prayed so many times to my husband to grant me a son. Now that You have appeared, I can understand this." If someone has lived in darkness throughout his entire life, will he be able to understand that he is in darkness? When a glimpse of light comes, he realizes, "Oh! I was in darkness for such a long time!" Like this, Devahuti said, "For so long I was bereft of knowledge, but when you appeared, I realized that I had been in ignorance, enveloped by nescience. This was the reason why I prayed for a son. Please tell me how I can pass over the ocean of births and deaths and the miseries of this world."

Kapila Bhagavan smiled. Why? He thought, "Why is Mother Devahuti speaking to Me in this way? 'I was in ignorance, I desired a son, etc.' I do not appear in the impure heart! What is she saying?"

sattvam visuddham vasudeva-sabditam
yad iyate tatra puman apavrtah
sattve ca tasmin bhagavan vasudevo
hy adhoksajo me namasa vidhiyate

(Srimad Bhagavatam, 4.3.23)

These are the words of Mahadeva (Lord Siva) in the Fourth Canto of Srimad Bhagavatam. Vasudeva appears in the sanctified heart. Vasudeva means

sanctified heart. "Jahan kama, tahan nahi rama" (Tulasi dasa Gosvami). "Where there is lust, there is no Rama." When we desire things for the satisfaction of our own gross and subtle senses, we come into contact with the inferior things of this world. God cannot appear there. Where there is the desire for enjoyment, there is no Rama, no God, no devotee and no realm of God-nothing is there. Kapila thought, "Why is she saying this? I appear in the sanctified heart! They have no desires of this world! They wanted Me, so I have appeared."

But Mother Devahuti said, "I was in darkness for such a long time." This is the special quality of the suddha bhakta. The suddha bhakta is the highest, but he has no pride or vanity. Because suddha bhaktas have knowledge of the Supreme Lord, because they have the taste of the highest truth, they think that they are nothing. When you see an inferior thing, you think, "I am higher than that. I am superior to it." But when you see a superior person, your head automatically bows down to him. So, it is very difficult to understand a suddha bhakta. The yogi and the jnani have pride. Actually, the suddha bhakta is the object of worship of the yogi and the jnani, but he has no vanity. So, the suddha bhakta cries that he has been in this world for so long, full of material desires.

So that we will not commit any offense toward the suddha bhakta, Kapila Bhagavan warned, "Mother! You do not have any such material desires! Your heart is sanctified! But, I shall reply to whatever you might ask me on behalf of the enslaved jivas of this world, for their eternal benefit!"

Then Kapila Bhagavan began His instructions to Mother Devahuti. You are to hear this repeatedly. We have already heard this many times, but it is our nature to forget. We hear now and, when we go outside, we forget. The repetition of hearing and chanting is necessary for this purpose. For my own self, it is also necessary-I also forget:

cetah khalv asya bandhaya
muktaye catmano matam
gunesu saktam bandhaya
ratam va pumsi muktaye

(Srimad Bhagavatam, 3.25.15)

The mind is the cause of bondage. But this same mind is also the cause of emancipation. How can this be? If one's mind is attached to tri-guna, the primal qualities of the external potency, then that person is in bondage. If his mind is attached to pumsi, to Supreme Lord Sri Krsna, Who is the Transcendental Supreme Reality, then he is emancipated. It has nothing to do with the body. This body has no work relevant to emancipation. The body is neither the cause of bondage nor emancipation. The mind is the cause of both. If one engages his mind in thinking about these worldly, temporary things, then he is in bondage. If one meditates on the Supreme Lord, his mind always being concentrated on Him, then he has salvation. So, mind is the cause of bondage and also of mukti--deliverance from the clutches of maya.

Mother Devahuti put questions to Kapila Bhagavan for the benefit of the enslaved jivas of this world. She asked, "What is tri-guna? We have little knowledge. Clearly explain this to me." It is something abstract. We cannot understand abstract things. She asked, "Explain this in a concrete way," so that we may understand. We are dunderheads. We are fools.

She continued, "Also, if we can achieve emancipation by having our minds attached to Supreme Lord Sri Krsna, how can we cultivate that attachment to Sri Krsna?" We cannot see Krsna. With our sense organs, we see all the living beings of this world and communicate with them. We exchange thoughts with them. We know that this body and all its relations will not live forever. We know this very well, but as we constantly exchange thoughts with these relations, we become attached to them. We see the deity in the temple and devotees refer to Him as Bhagavan, but He does not speak to us. If there is no exchange of thoughts, how can we cultivate attachment to the Lord? This is the problem. Rarely, from among crores (tens of millions) and crores of devotees, the Supreme Lord may have spoken to one or another. But He does not speak to us. Without such an exchange of thoughts, how can we feel love? Please explain this."

Then, Kapila Bhagavan said:

prasangam ajaram pasam
atmanah kavayo viduh
sa eva sadhusu krto
moksa-dvaram apavrtam
(Srimad Bhagavatam, 3.25.20)

Tri-guna means rajo-guna, sattva-guna and tamo-guna. By rajo-guna, living beings are created. By sattva-guna, those living beings are sustained and maintained. By tamo-guna, they are destroyed. Birth, existence and death are directed by these three gunas. This body is tri-guna. It was born and it will remain for some time in this world. Ultimately, it will perish. In concrete form, what is tri-guna? This body. If we always think only about the body--how to beautify the body, how to get the comforts of the body--then, we are attached to tri-guna. This is the cause of firm attachment. Where shall we go if we are always thinking about the body and, also, other bodies in relation to this body? "I have not seen the real self of my wife. I am seeing the tabernacle, the cage--both the subtle and the gross bodies-in which atma is residing. The body I see has been born, it will remain for some time and then it will die. I am associating with my own body. I am giving my attention to my own body, a non-eternal thing, and to other non-eternal things related to my own body, such as my wife, my children, etc. We are busy looking after our own body and other bodies. Kapila Bhagavan says that this is the cause of firm attachment. It is very difficult. We are in contact with the non-eternal things of this world. We are giving all our energy to non-eternal things. Thus, we become attached to them. It is only common sense.

Mother Devahuti then asked, "How can we communicate with the Supreme Lord? How can we cultivate that attachment to Sri Krsna? If we have attachment to the Supreme Lord, we will be rescued. But we cannot see Him. We see Him in His Deity form only. He does not speak with us."

Kapila Bhagavan replied, "You cannot see the Supreme Lord with these material eyes. 'Sa eva sadhusu krto moksa-dvaram apavrtam.' But, you can see the sadhus. They are moving about, just as you are. You can talk with them; you can exchange thoughts with them. You can behave this way with the sadhus. Then, you will be rescued. You cannot see God. This is true. You are presently giving your attention to your own body and other bodily relations, but you should give your energy for the service of a true devotee, the sadhu, the suddha bhakta. Prasangam: you should associate with them correctly, not superficially, externally. You can associate with the sadhu from here even if the sadhu is in India. India is so many thousands of miles away from the USA. But even from the USA, you can associate with the sadhu in India. The sadhu is thinking about the service of his object of worship: Radha-Govinda-Mahaprabhu. If you follow that thought, even from a great distance, then you are associating with the sadhu. But, remaining in physical proximity to the sadhu does not necessarily imply

association. You have gone to the Math and you have slept in the same room, by the side of the sadhu, but you were thinking about something else. The sadhu was thinking about the worship of Sri Krsna but you were thinking about something else. Can you have association with the sadhu like this? We once saw a Babaji Maharaja who was lying on his bed. He had been going from temple to temple, always performing harinama. While he was lying on the bed, we noticed that there were many bugs in it. They were "associating" with Babaji Maharaja. What were they doing? They were sucking his blood! Direct contact! This is not association. There are other kinds of insects, such as lice, who like to remain in the best part of the body: the head. What do they do? By sitting on the head, the best part of the body of the sadhu, they suck his blood. Merely remaining in the vicinity of the sadhu is not sadhu-sanga. The sadhu is thinking about the Supreme Lord and how to serve Him, but I am thinking how to exploit the sadhu. This is not sadhu-sanga. You can have sanga from a distance if the purpose is correct. The end justifies the means. If the end is bad, everything will be bad.

Srila Rupa Gosvami has advised us how to associate with the sadhus:

dadati pratigrhnati
guhyam akhyati prcchati
bhunkte bhojayate caiva
sad-vidham priti-laksanam
(Sri Upadesamrta 4)
When you love someone, what do you do? You exhibit this kind of six-fold behavior. "Dadati pratigrhnati": you give something to your beloved and take something from your beloved. Give and take--you have love for one another. "guhyam akhyati prcchati": you speak your heart to him and you hear his heart. This communication between hearts is there. You have love. You feed that person with great love, and whatever that person gives, you take it. In this way, you can have sadhu-sanga. If you perform such behavior with an asadhu, an evil-minded person, then evil thoughts will come to you. If you behave this way with a suddha bhakta, a pure heart, by donating money, the wealth of this world that is like poison, that sadhu will take it and engage it in the service of the Supreme Lord and the sadhus. After that, he will give some prasada. Prasada may be anything, such as a cloth or something else that the devotee may take. Once, Sanatana Gosvami was requested to accept a new dress-cloth from Tapana Misra. Sanatana Gosvami refused the new cloth, saying, "No, I will not take this new cloth. But, as you are a brahmana, I must accept your gift. I must also

accept because Caitanya Mahaprabhu has ordered me. But kindly give me a cloth that has been used by yourself. That prasada, I want. I do not want a new cloth." By using the used cloth, there will be no poison of visaya--the enjoying spirit will be removed. "Visaya" means " the object of enjoyment". It is the cause of our fall. When we give some visaya as a gift to the sadhu, he will engage it in the service of the Supreme Lord and the sadhus and return something to us. We should engage in this kind of exchange of behavior with the sadhu. We should open our hearts to the sadhu, and the sadhu will likewise open his heart. He will speak confidential things to us--bhajana rahasya: he will impart to us the esoteric aspects of worship. When I give my heart, then he will also give. I have to feed him with love, and he will give prasada. By such behavior, we can associate with the sadhus.

We should follow the teachings of the sadhu. We are not to place importance merely on external behavior. We must see the purpose for which sadhus are acting: for the service of Sri Krsna and the devotees. We should behave like the sadhu only when we understand the purpose of their behavior. We should follow, not imitate. What is the difference between following and imitation? This story may be given as an example.

There was once a peddler who maintained his family by selling caps. He would carry the caps on his head in a wicker basket. He would walk through the streets all day long selling these caps, taking his food along with him and eat along the way. He spent the day walking along the road, shouting, "Very nice caps for sale today! Price reduced! Take! Take! Take!" People would come and purchase his caps and he would thus maintain his family. But one day, even though he had spent the entire day shouting, he could not get any money. Not a single person had bought anything. Needless to say, he was very disappointed. Toward the afternoon, he became fatigued from so much walking. So, he sat under a big banyan tree. Being hungry, he ate the food that he had brought with him. After having eaten, he became drowsy and began to yawn. As he was so tired, he thought, "Let me lie down for some time." He spread a chadar on the grass beneath the tree and lay down. He placed the wicker basket, filled with caps, by the side of his head. He also kept a cap on his head and fell asleep.

After some time, some monkeys came from nearby and climbed up into the banyan tree. From the top of the tree, they could see that someone was sleeping underneath, who had a cap on top of his head, and next to him was a wicker basket-full of caps! "Oh!" they thought. "Let us get those caps!" They descended

the tree and, silently, they approached the basket. Each monkey took one cap and put it on his head. In this way, all the caps were emptied from the basket. The monkeys became very satisfied with themselves by having put the caps on their heads. They climbed back up the tree and started to jump about from one branch to another with great delight, shrieking, "Kak! Koo! Kak! Koo!"

Hearing the sound of the monkeys, the peddler woke up. He was surprised to see that it was now evening. He looked at his wicker basket and saw that it was empty. "What? Not a single cap was sold but the caps are all gone! Who took them?" He looked about and saw the monkeys with the caps. "Now I have eaten all the food and have none left. If I have no food to give the monkeys, they will not return the caps." If you go to Vrndavana, there are many monkey-devotees there. Those monkeys will steal your spectacles. They will only return them if you give them some food. Now, this peddler realized that he had nothing to give the monkeys. "If they surround me, I shall be killed by them!" he thought.

He became enraged and shouted, "You have taken all that I have! Why have you not taken the cap on my own head? Here, you should take it!" He took his cap and threw it at them.

The monkeys saw this and, taking their own caps in their hands, threw them at the peddler below. Because the peddler had thrown his cap toward them, they also threw their caps toward him. Now their caps were on the ground and they were left with nothing. They do not know why one wears a cap. They simply imitate. Such imitation is not good. "How is the sadhu sleeping? He is sleeping like this, so I shall have to sleep like that. How is he sitting? I shall have to sit like that. How does the sadhu take his steps?" All this is imitation. You have to know the purpose. You will be able to follow by knowing the purpose.

Mother Devahuti again put a question to Lord Kapila, "You are now advising us to associate with sadhus. How can we recognize the sadhu? Who is the sadhu? What are the symptoms? What are the qualities of the sadhu? Please tell me."

Then, Kapila Bhagavan said, "By these qualities, you are to understand. One particular quality is the original quality: krsnaika-sarana. When that original quality is there, side by side, there are other concomitant qualities." First, Kapila Bhagavan described these accompanying, concomitant qualities. He describes the original quality later on. By seeing these qualities, you are to know that the person is a sadhu:

titiksavah karunikah
suhrdah sarva-dehinam
ajata-satravah santah
sadhavah sadhu-bhusanah
(Srimad Bhagavatam, 3.25.21)
We have been discussing the twenty-six qualities listed by Kaviraja Gosvami, but here, in a simplified form, Kapila Bhagavan is saying that these are the secondary or concomitant qualities. In Sanskrit, these are called "tatastha-laksana". The original quality is called "svarupa-laksana". You have to know the terminology of sanatana-dharma or you will not be able to understand. You have to be acquainted with the devotional terminology of Caitanya Mahaprabhu's teachings. "Tatastha-laksana" means concomitant qualities, side by side with the original quality. The accompanying qualities appear only when the original quality is there.

The first of these accompanying qualities is "titiksavah": tolerance, forgiveness. sadhus have no material desires, so sadhus can be tolerant. When we have desires and there is some obstacle to the fulfillment of those desires, then we become angry. "Kamat krodho 'bhijayate" (Bhagavad-gita, 2.62). We become unbalanced. The only desire of the sadhu is the satisfaction of Sri Krsna, nothing else. He has no desire for wealth, no desire for sexual satisfaction, no desire for name and fame. If we have the desire for wealth and someone puts some obstacle in our way, we become furious. But there is no cause for the sadhu to become furious and unbalanced. He does not want anything. Therefore, the sadhu is, by nature, tolerant and forgiving towards others.

Our Guru Maharaja used to give one very good illustration of this. The sadhu's behavior should be such:

ghrstam ghrstam punarapi punah candanam caru gandham
chinnam chinnam punarapi punah sadhucaiva iksu khandam
dagdham dagdham punarapi punah kancanam kanta rupam
na pranante prakrtir-vikrti jayate sajjananam
"Sat-jana": "Sat" means that which exists eternally. "Hari om tat sat." Sat is transcendental and that which is transcendental is sat. Mundane things are not sat. Sat is Hari, the Supreme Lord. The associates of Sri Hari, the devotees of Hari, are called "sat-jana". Under no circumstances do they become unbalanced. Take for example, sandalwood. If you rub sandalwood, if you graze it, does the

sandalwood say, "Oh! You are giving me pain! I shall stop smelling sweetly. I shall give off a bad odor"? If you rub sandalwood, will it ever give off a bad smell? The bad smell is absent from its nature. You will always get a sweet smell from it. In this way, if the sadhu is oppressed, does he say, "Oh! He has done injury to me!" and retaliate? No! Instead, he is thinking, "I have done some wrong. This person is only instrumental. I am experiencing the fruits of my own actions. This person is not the cause." The sadhu tolerates the oppression. But we, in our ignorance, blame others for our own miseries.

Narada Gosvami gave advice to Dhruva. Dhruva's mother, Suniti, also advised him thusly. "If you have any kind of hostile mentality against your stepmother, then you will not succeed in your worship of the Lord. You will not receive His grace. Your stepmother is not the cause of your miseries--you are the cause. You have brought this upon yourself through some behavior in a previous birth. You are now reaping the fruits of that behavior:

mamangalam tata paresu mamstha
bhunkte jano yat para-duhkhadas tat
(Srimad Bhagavatam, 4.8.17)
"Do not blame others for your afflictions. You do not realize that you are receiving the same afflictions that you once inflicted upon others. God is omniscient. There cannot be any mistake in His judgment. You should tolerate this." Sadhus think like this. A sadhu does not retaliate against the oppression of others. Goodness always emanates from the sadhu. He cannot give any injury to any living being of this world. The tendency toward harm is completely absent from his character, so how can he do harm? He always does good toward others. In the holy biography of Prahlada Maharaja, you will find that he tolerated the oppression of Hiranyakasipu. Haridasa Thakura, during the life of Caitanya Mahaprabhu, also tolerated great oppression--titiksavah.

If sugarcane is cut to pieces, will it say, "Oh! You have given me affliction! I shall give up my sweet nature! I shall become bitter or sour!"? Even if you cut sugarcane to pieces, it will not give up its nature. It will always give a sweet taste. Its nature is to give sweetness. No other tendency is there. If you heat gold, that gold will not give up its radiant glow. "Oh! I have been burnt by fire! I shall give up my beautiful radiance and become black!" No, as much as you heat the gold, by that much, its glow will increase. Like this, if you oppress the sadhu, his glory will be manifested ever more and more. He is incapable of doing any harm to any living being of the world. By such behavior, you are to understand such a

person to be a sadhu.

"Karunikah" is like "krpalu". The sadhu is always compassionate and kind to all the jivas of this world. He could very easily worship by sitting in one holy place of pilgrimage, but he chooses not to do this. Instead he moves from one place to another because he sees that all the living beings of this world do not know how to find their eternal welfare. They are in darkness. Seeing this, the sadhu cannot tolerate it. He moves from one place to another to make the jivas understand that they are on the wrong path. "You have forgotten your Supreme Lord, Who is All-Bliss, All-Existence, All-Knowledge! You are running after a phantasmagoria! You should worship the Lord!" Like that, the sadhu goes from door to door. This was Caitanya Mahaprabhu's order to Nityananda Prabhu and Haridasa Thakura. "Go beg from door to door. Do not beg for money, etc., but say, "Bolo `krsna,' bhajo krsna, koro krsna-siksa!" Nityananda Prabhu and Haridasa Thakura went to every door and said, "We have come with this message of Caitanya Mahaprabhu! Please utter the Name of Krsna! We do not want anything else. Worship Krsna! Study about Krsna: find out who you are and what your relationship is with Him. This is all we beg from you." Going from house to house, as per the direction of Caitanya Mahaprabhu, they did this. Today, through that preceptorial channel, as per the direction of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, we are going to different places and performing sankirtana everywhere. So, this is the way in which the sadhus do good to others, for their eternal welfare. Those who are enslaved jivas are in bondage. They do not know what is in the interest of their own eternal welfare. What can they do? They can do things for material benefit, but not more than that.

"Suhrdah sarva-dehinam": Sadhus are the friends of all corporeal living beings. Are they only friends of the human beings and enemies of the beasts? No. They see that, in every being, the spiritual spark is present. We were also previously born as aquatic animals, trees, birds, etc. We should be compassionate toward them. We should not kill them. The sadhu has no impetus to do any injury to others because he sees Krsna and that all are connected to Krsna. If I love you, I cannot have the tendency to injure any part of you. To love you means that I love you along with all your parts. That is actual love. I say that I love you, but I am, at the same time, cutting your hand or cutting your leg. That is not love. If I have love for Krsna, then I shall have love for all living beings. Then actual love is there. Sadhus have this understanding. For this reason, they cannot have the temptation and mental inclination to do injury to others. It is absent in them.

You might say, "Yes, but they are eating vegetables. Vegetables also have life and they are killing them." Yes, it is true that if one eats vegetables for his own sake, then he is killing them. But what do sadhus do? They do everything for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord. They know that all the living beings have to serve the Supreme Lord. These beings (vegetables) are in an undeveloped state of covered consciousness and they have no way to serve the Supreme Lord. But sadhus offer them for the service of Sri Krsna:

yajna-sistasinah santo
mucyante sarva-kilbisaih
bhunjate te tv agham papa
ye pacanty atma-karanat
(Bhagavad-gita, 3.13)
One of Bhagavan's Names is "Yajna" (sacrifice). He is the only Enjoyer and Master. He destroys all the sins of the devotee who partakes of the remnants of prasada. But, those who take vegetarian or non-vegetarian food are both incurring sin. Those who are taking vegetarian food are less sinful because they are killing less developed sentient beings. If one kills a highly developed sentient being, that is the greatest sin. But sadhus, after cooking, offer the preparations to the Lord, as per scriptural injunction. When those vegetables are being offered to the Lord, they are performing service. For that, those entities receive eternal benefit. There cannot be any sin in this activity when there is eternal benefit. They are doing good to those entities. All their sins will be destroyed. Sadhus do not merely take vegetables. They take that which can be offered to the Supreme Lord as prasada.

"Ajata-satravah": Sadhus do not see anyone as their enemy. "This is my friend and that is my foe." You will not find this sort of discrimination in the sadhu. All are connected with the Supreme Lord. There is no foe. My mind is the greatest foe. I have no other foe in this world. Prahlada also says in his prayer to the Supreme Lord, "When we become enveloped by the illusory energy of the Supreme Lord, we have the vision that this is my friend, that is my foe, this is mine and that belongs to someone else. We get this sort of distorted vision when we are enveloped by maya. I bow down to the Supreme Lord, by Whose energy, we in this world think that this man is a foe and that man is a friend, this country is a foe and that country is a friend."

"Santah": Sadhus are always calm and serene because they have no desire other

than the service of Sri Krsna.

"Sadhavah sadhu-bhusanah": Sadhus give all respect to the scriptures. They practice everything as per scriptural injunction. They do not go against scripture. Another meaning of this phrase is that they are simple hearted, simple natured. They have no crookedness.

These are the secondary qualities of the sadhu--tatastha-laksana. But what is the original quality?

mayy ananyena bhavena
bhaktim kurvanti ye drdham
mat-krte tyakta-karmanas
tyakta-svajana-bandhavah
(Srimad Bhagavatam, 3.25.22)
Kapila Bhagavan says, "I am the Complete Reality. One who is loyal to Me, to the Whole, is actually a sadhu." If you are loyal to the USA, you might harbor hostility toward other countries. If you are loyal to Europe, then you might exhibit hostility toward Asia. If you have loyalty for this world, then, in the interest of this world, you will go to exploit Mars and other planets. If you have loyalty for this brahmanda, constituted of fourteen planetary systems, you will exploit another brahmanda. If, however, you act only on behalf of Complete Reality, the Supreme Lord, whom can you exploit? Everything is in Him. That person whose allegiance is to Complete Reality is the actual sadhu. Deviation from that, when one's interest is for the individual parts, is the lowest position. The highest, most elevated position is given to those who are steadfastly aligned with the Complete Reality. "Mayy ananyena bhavena bhaktim kurvanti ye drdham": "One who has firm devotion for Me and sincerely worships Me, knows that, by worshipping Me, he serves all." Without worshipping Krsna, you cannot do good to any sentient beings of this world. The sadhu has this kind of knowledge. When we pour water on the roots of a tree, the whole tree is nourished. When we give food to the stomach, the whole body is nourished. The same holds true for "Acyuta Sri Hari": all are interconnected. Nobody can be detached. By serving Sri Hari, you serve all. This is actual service. This is the original quality of the sadhu. If this is absent, then he cannot be termed "sadhu". He may exhibit some sort of external quality, but that has no intrinsic value. When we have one-pointed devotion to Sri Krsna, all other qualities will come to us.

yasyasti bhaktir bhagavaty akincana
sarvair gunais tatra samasate surah
harav abhaktasya kuto mahad-guna
mano-rathenasati dhavato bahih
(Srimad Bhagavatam 5.18.12)
All other qualities are present in one who has one-pointed devotion to Supreme Lord Sri Krsna. A person who is averse to Sri Krsna, who has no devotion, has no qualities. He is running after worldly things so how can he have any qualities? From where can he get these qualities? Qualities come from God. If you have one-pointed devotion to Sri Krsna, all the qualities will come to you. We think that we have become civilized in this world. How is this civilized? The so-called civilization of this world is a mere hypocrisy. If one acts in a hypocritical manner, exhibiting grand external behavior, then, in the Kali-yuga, that is considered to be civilized. What is this civilization of Kali-yuga? We have something inside. Our behavior shows one thing but in the heart dwells something else. Outwardly, we shake a person's hand, but inwardly we want to kill that person. You will now find this sort of "civilization" in Kali-yuga. You will get actual civilization only from a suddha bhakta--a Vaisnava--who is one in his words and heart. Those who are "avaisnava" (not Vaisnava) behave hypocritically, with deceitfulness, displaying mere etiquette. They have no sincerity.

Take, for example, a small boy. He is very beautiful. As he plays here and there, he smears his body with dust and mud. But still, that boy is giving happiness to his parents. If he is decorated with beautiful clothes, then he becomes even more beautiful to them. But if the life leaves that body, and that dead body is decorated with all the most beautiful garments and ornaments, will that dead body give any happiness to the parents or any other person? All will be afraid at the sight of the dead body. When we do not have one-pointed devotion to Sri Krsna, there is no life in our existence. It is like a lifeless, dead body. By decorating your dead body, you cannot get satisfaction for yourself and you cannot give satisfaction to others. You are lifeless.

When you have one-pointed devotion to Sri Krsna, then actual qualities with intrinsic value will appear. Now, without devotion to the Supreme Lord, whatever qualities you may exhibit have no actual intrinsic value. It is an outward show only. It is not coming from within.

"Mat-krte tyakta-karmanas": In India, you will find that all human beings are not

of the same status. There are differences. In one person, you will find sattva-guna predominating, in another rajo-guna predominating and in another, tamo-guna. So, they are advised to practice varnasrama-dharma, whereby they are encouraged to act according to their own ability and level of competence within the four varnas (brahmana, ksatriya, vaisya and sudra) and four asramas (brahmacari, grhastha, vanaprastha and sannyasi). If they relinquish this practice, they will be committing a sin. They will be violating the Vedic order. But, if they relinquish this for the service of Sri Krsna, it will be correct.

You will find, in the Gita, Krsna first told Arjuna, "Perform your work according to your own competency. Do not attempt to do the work of others who are of a different nature." But ultimately, He says, "Sarva-dharman parityajya, mam ekam saranam vraja" (18.66). "Give up all the relative duties I have spoken about earlier and take absolute shelter of Me. You are my own person. You are related to Me. You are part of My own potency. I have hitherto advised you to act according to your own capacity, but you will obtain your actual, eternal welfare when you take absolute shelter of Me." When we take absolute shelter of the Supreme Lord, we will not be committing sin by giving up those relative duties. But, take careful note of the words, "mat-krte": for Me. "Performing household duties or brahmacari duties has become too difficult, so I have given them up." Thinking like this, you are committing sin. You are violating the Vedic injunctions. But if you take shelter of Supreme Lord Sri Krsna, then automatically you are performing service for all.

Generally, we refer to those who have given up their household life as sadhus. "I am married. I have a wife and children. I have no funds to maintain them. So, I have given up household life. I am moving along the road, begging. I have become a sadhu." He is not a sadhu. He is committing a sin. But if a person lives within household life, serving Krsna, then all the family members are benefited. "Mat-krte tyakta-karmanas tyakta-svajana-bandhavah": "for Me."

What are the original qualities of the sadhu? One is one-pointed devotion to the Supreme Lord and another is that you have to give up this varnasrama-dharma and bodily relations for the service of Sri Krsna. If you do this, then you are doing good to all. That is a sadhu. Another of the original qualities of the sadhu is that the sadhu only likes to hear and speak about Krsna:

mad-asrayah katha mrstah
srnvanti kathayanti ca

tapanti vividhas tapa
naitan mad-gata-cetasah
(Srimad Bhagavatam, 3.25.23)
Why does the sadhu wish only to hear and speak about Krsna? When the sadhu does not have the company of his beloved Supreme Lord, how can he live? How can he survive? He survives by singing the glories of the Supreme Lord, always hearing about and remembering Him. That is the life and soul of the sadhu. No sadhu can survive without hearing and speaking about Krsna. It is like water to a fish. A fish cannot remain without water. Like that, without hearing about Krsna, without speaking about Krsna, without remembering Krsna, a sadhu cannot survive. That is his very life. That quality must be present in him. Having separation grief, he cannot remain without speaking about Krsna. That quality you must clearly be able to see: whether or not he has the taste to hear and speak about Krsna's Name, Form, Attributes, etc.

The sadhu cannot speak for money or some other ulterior motive. Then it is not hari-katha, as it is not for Krsna:

"You have given up everything. You have taken shelter of the Supreme Lord, but you have no belief! The Supreme Lord is maintaining and sustaining the whole universe--even all the beings who are averse to Him. If anybody takes shelter of Him, will he not be protected? Do you not have such belief? You have to take money for giving Him service? Hearing is devotional service. Speaking for the satisfaction of Sri Krsna is also devotion."

"But, if we take no money, then how shall we live?"

"Then let us die! If no one gives us food for our service and we die, then let us die! What is the use of having this sort of belief? God is maintaining the whole universe. He will not maintain me? Why should I ask for this?"

If a person goes to another's house and starts working for him, without demanding anything, how long will the master of the house remain silent? Two or three days go by without feeding him. The master thinks, "He is working for me. How can I eat without giving him something?" That person might be a very bad person, but the master does not consider this. If anybody acts on behalf of the Supreme Lord, will He not protect him? The Supreme Lord is All-Powerful. He maintains infinite brahmandas but does not give these worldly things to the devotees? So why should you accept money for speaking about the Supreme

Lord. If you hear that sort of speech, then that person is speaking about the end, and that end is money.

For this reason, we should always remember Nrsimhadeva. Nrsimhadeva kills Hiranyakasipu. Who is Hiranyakasipu? "Hiranya" means wealth and "kasipu" means bed--sexual desire. So "Hiranyakasipu" means "those who have desire for wealth and sex, and also for name and fame". Such persons cannot get Krsna. So, Hiranyakasipu is within us. Externally, we may see a demon, but that demon is also residing within ourselves. That demon should be killed! Then you can go to Krsna. There is also one-pointed, causeless, eternal devotion residing within our real selves. That is called "Prahlada". There is Prahlada, Nrsimha Bhagavan and bhakti. Nrsimha Bhagavan will remove all ulterior motives from our hearts. He will kill Hiranyakasipu and enhance Prahlada. So we should remember Lord Nrsimhadeva:

ito nrsimhah parato nrsimha
yato yato yami tato nrsimha
bahir nrsimha hrdaye nrsimha
nrisimham adim saranam prapadye

Questions and Answers

Devotee: One thing I am kind of wondering is, that, among the many different groups of Vaishnavas, there is sometimes some conception everyone seems to agree with. When we perfect the path of devotion and go to the spiritual world, we have an eternal relationship with Krishna. That relationship is spiritual, so it is dynamic and changing but in another sense it is eternal and is unchanging. My question is this: when we go to the spiritual world where our relationship with Krishna and His devotees is eternal and unchanging, is there anything that we may do here in this material realm that will alter our relationship with Krishna? I

shall give an example. If I become a big guru with many disciples and then go back to the spiritual world to have a relationship with my guru and Krishna, will I be able to do more service? Could it be a material thought that I will be able to do better quality, more wonderful service in this way?

HDG Srila B. B. Tirtha Maharaj: I have heard from my Gurudeva, Srila Bhakti Dayita Madhava Goswami Maharaj, the elder godbrother of Srila Swami Maharaj, that the guru never thinks of himself as guru. But an outside person may think that this person is acting as guru by giving mantra and that another person is acting as a disciple by the taking of mantra. But the guru always thinks that he is the eternal servant of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. He will be satisfied if the conditioned souls, who are averse to the Supreme Lord and have forgotten their relationship with Him, are able to understand Him. If he can enable them to understand their real nature and bring them under the shelter of the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord, then the Supreme Lord will be happy. For that reason, the guru tries to explain to them that they are not of this world, that they are connected to the Supreme Lord and that they are His eternal servants---the outcome of His marginal potency. All potencies should remain for the possessor of the potency. My potency works for me and the Supreme Lord's potency works for Him. Only that should be awakened.

For example, there is a magnet and there is iron. The magnet has the power to attract iron. When iron comes near the magnet, it becomes attracted. If both a magnet and iron are there but there is no attraction, then something must be wrong. Krishna is there and He is attracting all. By attracting all, He pleases all. He is called Krishna because '*krish*' means "to attract" and '*na*' means "to give happiness." By attracting He is giving *anand*---bliss. He attracts everyone. Nandanandana Krishna possesses all kinds of qualities, all kinds of sweetness and all kinds of delightfulness, but He is not attracting me---I am not feeling anything! What is the defect? The magnet and the iron are both there. If the iron is not running toward the magnet then the iron must have some sort of defect. There is a coating of rust on the iron, and if I remove the rust, then the natural function will become manifested. Then the iron will run to the magnet. The magnet will attract it. In this way, when we become averse to the Supreme Lord, we become covered by the illusory energy (*maya*) in the form of three primeval qualities, namely *sattva, rajas* and *tamas*. By *rajo-guna* we are born, we remain in this world by means of *sattva-guna* and by *tamo-guna*, we die. We are then

compelled to take birth in different species and again we die. By great fortune we have achieved this human birth. Only in the human birth has God given us the discriminative power: "You should think whether you want to enjoy this world or if you would rather come to Me." Give up the desire to enjoy and dominate the material world. You should not just engage in eating, mating, sleeping and defending. All the animals are doing the same thing. You have been given this special potency that you must utilize to accept the eternal and reject the non-eternal.

When, by our previous good impressions (*sukriti*), we knowingly or unknowingly serve Krishna, we create an impact on our real self. When we do something good in this world we get physical and mental benefit, but that is only temporary. The body is not eternal so the benefit is also not eternal. Our real self is eternal and is eternally connected to the Supreme by means of association with a *suddha-bhakta*---a pure devotee.

There are many different forms of the Supreme Lord such as Lakshmi-Narayana, Sita-Rama, Dwarakadisha Krishna, Mathuradhisha Krishna and Nandanandana Krishna. All these are different forms. There is Half-man/Half-lion Bhagavan (Narasimha), Fish Bhagavan (Matsya), Boar Bhagavan (Varaha) and so many more. Now, if you receive the grace of the preceptorial channel for Boar Bhagavan, then that mantra will take you to the abode of Boar Bhagavan and, similarly, if you take mantra from a pure devotee of Narasimha Bhagavan, then that mantra will take you to Lord Narasimha's abode. If you take mantra from a devotee of Dwaraka Krishna, then it will take you to Dwaraka. If you take mantra from Nandanandana Krishna's devotee, then you can go to His abode. You have to go through the *bhagavata-marg* (the devotional path) and when you want to stop somewhere, you must not---you must go on. You have taken Krishna mantra from a personal associate of Nandanandana Krishna and you are not to stop---you must continue relentlessly. Then you will cross, cross, cross and, ultimately, at the culmination, you will reach the lotus feet of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. At Prayag, Sriman Mahaprabhu imparted this knowledge, which is the culmination of *bhakti-rasa*, to Srila Rupa Goswami. "How to obtain *krishna-prema*" is the subject of the 19th chapter of *Madhya-lila* of *Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita*. Have you gone through this?

Without performing any service to Krishna and the *krishna-bhakta*, you cannot have the desire to understand the Absolute. *"Athato brahma-jijnasa"*: "Now is

the time to inquire about the Absolute Truth." Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has taught us the proper mode of inquiry through Srila Sanatana Goswami. When the time of deliverance from maya arrives, then we will put relevant questions to a realized soul---a *sadguru* (a bonafide preceptor). Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu appeared in the mood of a devotee. In the form of Radharani, the Highest Guru, Nandanandana Krishna Himself appeared. Sanatana Goswami asked Him questions such as, "Who and what am I? Why am I burning from the three-fold afflictions [miseries caused by one's own body and mind, miseries caused by other living entities and miseries caused by the demigods in the form of natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, hurricanes and so on]? What is the ultimate object and how are we to get it?" When we put these questions to a *sadguru*, then the time for emancipation from the entanglement of this non-eternal sphere has come. It was declared by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to Srila Sanatana Goswami. You must have these types of questions in mind.

Devotee: You mentioned a different mantra---a Nandanandana mantra from a realized soul.

HDG Srila B. B. Tirtha Maharaj: Srila Sanatana Goswami has written this in his *Brihad-Bhagavatamritam*. You will get many things on the way to Krishna and, if you stop, you will not make any progress. Whatever you have gotten from your Gurudeva, you have to continue to do, with sincerity. Then you will cross Vaikuntha, you will cross Ayodhya and, eventually, you will reach the *dhama* (holy abode) of Nandanandana Krishna. Patience should be there, for without patience you cannot get anything.

Quotes on Navadwip Dham Parikrama by Srila Gurudeva

"By performing parikrama, our love and attachment to the Supreme Lord increases and we lose interest in any matter not related to the Supreme Lord."

"Sri Mayapura and Sri Navadvip dham are not parts of West Bengal or India or a

land of matter. Navadvip dham or Sri Mayapura dham has descended. As Sri Gaurhari is beyond our comprehension, His dham is also beyond our comprehension. By the causeless mercy of Sri Gaurhari, Gaur-dham, we can have contact with it."

"Circumambulation of the Holy Abode of Supreme Lord Sri Hari is one of the principal devotions out of 64 kinds of devotion as indicated by Sri Rüpa Goswami in his writing 'Sri Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu'"

"Parikrama for devotion is to be performed on bare foot. It will be service to the devotees if we can give them comfort in performing parikrama on bare foot. Service to devotees is actual service to God."

"Many householder devotees who are not able to get much sadhu sanga, come for Navadwip dham parikrama and the effect of this injection remains for rest of the year and then again."

"A household devotee will do vaishnav-seva, Harinama and Bhagavat path in all holy deeds. To pray Grace of Bhagwan Narasingh Deva is also good to remove obstacles. You can do vaishnav-seva at Sri Mayapura during Navadwipa-dham parikrama."

Ravana Deceived

Once, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu as a guest learned that the brahmin was in a state of shock after he had heard about the abduction of Sitadevi by Ravana. The brahmin managed to give some food to the Lord, but he himself was observing fasting and was always waling and lamenting. Mahaprabhu asked, "Why are you not taking anything to eat?" He replied, "I want to die. I heard that my beloved Mother Janaki, Sitadevi, was abducted by a demon! If I have to hear that if that should even enter my ear, then I want to die; I don't want to live any longer."

Then Mahaprabhu consoled him: "No, no, don't think like that. Sitadevi is Lakshmidevi herself. She is *cinmaya* consciousness personified, not having a body composed of any material elements. Sitadevi's body is not made of flesh and blood, so what to speak of forcibly carrying her away, Ravana can neither see nor touch her; he cannot even see her. Sitadevi's form is composed of such substance that Ravana can neither see nor touch her! This is the fact. So don't disturb your mind. This is the truth, I say, so you take *prasadam*." Then that devotee took *prasadam*.

Later Mahaprabhu went further south, and in one place He found that the devotees there were reading the Kurma Purana, wherein it is mentioned that when Ravana came to steal away Sita, she took shelter by entering into fire, and the fire-god Agni gave some imitation Sita to Ravana, and Ravana took that maya-Sita away. Then after killing Ravana and attaining victory, before taking Sita from Lanka, Ramchandra said, "To prove her chastity, she must enter into blazing fire, and if she can pass through that test, then I shall accept Her. For one whole year she was living with a demon-family, and therefore I cannot immediately trust her chastity." Then so many devotees began to weep, but by the order of Ramchandra the fire was prepared and Sitadevi had to enter. When the fire receded, Sitadvi came out with a smiling face and the devotees began to cry out, "Jaya! Sitadevi ki jaya!"

This was written in that Kurma Purana, and Mahaprabhu asked the reader, "Please give Me the original page and insert a newly-written copy in there; I met a Brahmin who is extremely troubled, thinking that Sitadevi was actually abducted by Ravana. I want to show him this old page of this book to convince him that I was not just consoling him, but it is written in the *shastra* that Ravana could not touch the real Sitadevi because she is consciousness personified not matter, nor any flesh or blood or bone of any such things." On 21 Oct 07.

Relative Independence

Once, there was a magician. A friend told him that he was experiencing marital difficulties. He said, "I have everything I need, but my wife is not congenial. She is always doing something to displease me, so I am not happy. How can I control her? You are a magician. Can't you help me? You must know a spell or something." The magician gave him a magic wand and said, "Your wife will obey you, whatever you command."

The man went back to his house with the wand and ordered his wife, "Come here!" and his wife came. "Go there!" he said, and his wife went. "Sit here!" he commanded, and his wife sat down. But after doing this for sometime, he realized he was still not happy. Why? Because his wife had become like a dog! He realized that for them to have a joyful relationship, she must have her independence, the ability to think independently. Only if she served willingly could there be happiness. If consciousness is destroyed, there can be no happiness. In the same way, God is not so ignorant that He chooses to suppress the relative independence of the jivas. He retains it and His counterpart, Gurudeva, does the same. But they make the jivas understand that they are eternal servants of the Supreme Lord and that by serving Him they will become happy. They try to change the jivas mentality by showing them their own ideal character and example, and by explaining to and inspiring them.

God does not want to destroy the relative independence of His minute particles. With whom will He enjoy His pastimes? In order for service to exist, there must be both a servitor and a served. Only then does prema or divine love become a possibility. There can be no such love where there is only one person. The jivas who are now here in this material world have forgotten Krishna, but ultimately, when they experience the awakening of the eternal nature of the self, they will cry for the Lord with great earnestness and perturbation. And God will taste and relish their emotion. Why should we deprive God of that pleasure? On 03 July 07.

Relinquish everything for the service of Sri Krishna :

In India, you will find that not all human beings are of the same status. There are differences. In one person, you will find sattva-guna predominating, in another rajo-guna predominating and in another, tamo-guna. So, they are advised to practice varnasrama-dharma, whereby they are encouraged to act according to their own ability and level of competence within the four varnas (brahmana, ksatriya, vaisya and sudra) and four asramas (brahmacari, grhastha, vanaprastha and sannyasi). If they relinquish this practice, they will be committing a sin. They will be violating the vedic order. But, if they relinquish this for the service of Sri Krishna, it will be correct.

You will find, in the Gita, Krishna first told Arjuna, "Perform your work according to your own competency. Do not attempt to do the work of others who are of a different nature." But ultimately, He says, "Sarva-dharman parityajya, mam ekam saranam vraja" (18.66). "Give up all the relative duties I have spoken about earlier and take absolute shelter of Me. You are my own person. You are related to Me. You are part of My own potency. I have hitherto advised you to act according to your own capacity, but you will obtain your actual, eternal welfare when you take absolute shelter of Me."

When we take absolute shelter of the Supreme Lord, we will not be committing sin by giving up those relative duties. But, take careful note of the words, "mat-krte": for Me. "Performing household duties or brahmacari duties have become too difficult, so I have given them up." Thinking like this, you are committing sin. You are violating the vedic injunctions. But if you take shelter of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, then automatically you are performing service for all. Generally, we refer to those who have given up their household life as sadhus. But if one thinks "I am married. I have a wife and children. I have no funds to maintain them. So, I have given up household life. I am moving along the road, begging. I have become a sadhu." then such a person is not a sadhu. He is committing a sin. But if a person lives within household life, serving Krishna, then all the family members are benefited. "Mat-krte tyakta-karmanas tyakta-svajana-bandhavah": "For Me."

Repugnance to Sri Krishna is to be removed

We should not be disappointed by the happenings of the world and give up our Bhajana. This world is the place of turmoil and disturbances caused by the illusory energy of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. Only a completely surrendered soul can emancipate himself from the grit of illusory energy and can surmount the ocean of births and deaths — threefold afflictions. We are to practise six-fold saranagati which is the basis of devotional life. Without saranagati, there cannot be Bhakti.

We should not be perturbed by mundane worldly loss and gain. We should be very careful about the eternal benefit of the eternal self which will go with us.

Whatever is done by the Will of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna Who is All-Good, is for the eternal benefit of all. Jivas reap the fruits of their own Karma. Nobody is to be blamed for this. We should not be perturbed under any circumstance and give up Bhajana in our short duration of stay in this transitory world. A completely surrendered soul is always protected and maintained by Sri Krishna. There is no cause of anxiety to him. He remains calm under all circumstances. We are controlled by Absolute-Will. We cannot do anything against His Will. Whether we shall lead an ascetic life or household life depends upon His Will. If He wishes anything, nobody can obstruct it.

We cannot see adjustment and cannot find solution by our own capacity. Total unconditional submission is the only way of solving all problems. Jivas commit offence at the Lotus Feet of Sri Krishna, when they, being eternal servants of Sri Krishna, become averse to Sri Krishna. As long as Jivas will not remove this offence, there will be no practical solution. Maya will surely envelop them and there will be desire for enjoyment which will hurl them down to hell — intense suffering.

The root cause of the disease is to be eradicated, otherwise undesirable symptoms will crop up.

Hence, the root cause of all troubles, repugnance to Sri Krishna, is to be removed. We are averse to Sri Krishna from time immemorial. This averseness cannot be removed all of a sudden. It may require thousands of births or one birth. Even Ambarish Maharaja, the great devotee, could conquer all material desires gradually. Nothing can be achieved all of a sudden.

'Sadhya' — ultimate blissful spiritual existence — cannot be attained without 'Sadhana'. Association of bona fide real Sadhus is essential for spiritual enhancement.

Root Cause of Frustration

Root cause of frustration is that a person chants Harinam, worships deities, reads scriptures etc. and follows the rules and regulations but not being surrendered to Supreme Lord, instead with the ego that we are the doers. So when some Sad guru engages some jivas in devotion to Supreme Lord or teaches worshipof deities, the first lesson taught is that he is not of this material world, actually he is the servant of the servants of the servants of Supreme Lord Gopinath. All actions done without the feeling that, 'I am theservant of Sree Krishna, I am the servant of the Absolute Counter part of Sree Krishna - Gurudeva', may outwardly seem to be devotional practices, but actually all are auspicious Karmas, and their fruit is 'punya'. Nobody can attain realisation of Supreme Lord by 'Punya', it can only be attained by pure devotion.Without getting any realisation of the Supreme Lord or higher taste, it is natural to become frustrated understrict restrictions, rules and regulations. So in western countries it is often seen that people see something new, they accept and practice it, but then give up after some time. One gets the higher taste, realisation of Supreme Lord only by Guru Kripa, but Guru Kripa is impartial. Kripa is 'Nimnga' like water naturally flows from higher to lower positions, similarly Guru Kripa comes upon a surrendered disciple.

Since we have been averse to Supreme Lord since timeimmemorial, our

actions and thoughts are also averse to Supreme Lord. So we are to follow the Absolute Counterpart of Supreme Lord, Gurudeva and revered vaishnavas only.

Sanctifying the Heart

Tomorrow, Krsna will appear. He will appear in the shrine of our hearts. He is there within us and He will appear there. So, today, on this adhivasa tithi, we have to clear the heart and mind so that Krsna will come and sit there. Krsna does not take His seat in an impure, dirty place. Krsna is the Holiest. We have to prepare our hearts, purify our hearts. There should be no desire other than the service of Sri Krsna. If there should be any other desire, then that heart is impure. As long as impure thoughts are there, Krsna will not appear.

In Purusottama-dhama (Puri), during the time of the car festival (Ratha-yatra), Lord Jagannatha travels from His temple in Puri to the Gundica Temple, a distance of about two miles. Caitanya Mahaprabhu explains that the Gundica Temple is Vrndavana and the Jagannatha Temple is Kuruksetra. During a solar eclipse, people go to Kuruksetra to bathe and perform other rituals. In the scriptures, you will find descriptions of the immense glories of this practice. During the time of Krsna's pastimes on Earth, there was a solar eclipse where Krsna came from Dvaraka to Kuruksetra with all His personal associates. At that time, Krsna was the King, Emperor and Sole Proprietor of Dvaraka. All His subjects, consorts and personal associates were very eager to go to Kuruksetra during the solar eclipse so they could bathe, perform sandhya and other rituals. If they could perform these sacrifices with the brahmanas, they could get immense fruits. To fulfill this desire of His subjects, Krsna said, "All right, we shall go." So, all the numerous subjects, consorts and personal associates came to Kuruksetra. Krsna intentionally invited everyone except the Vrajavasis-the devotees of Vraja.

Narada Gosvami was very shocked by this. He approached Krsna, saying, "The

Vrajavasis love You so much. They are experiencing extreme separation grief by not seeing You. You are inviting everyone in the whole world but You are not inviting the Vrajavasis? What offense are they guilty of? Have they committed an offense by loving You? I cannot tolerate this!" Then Krsna said, "They are our own people. No one has to send invitations to one's own. Parents do not invite their children, and vice versa. They are our own. Outside people are invited. How can I invite the Vrajavasis? You are right, I intentionally did not invite them because they are saturated with love for Me. They have no interest in performing sacrifices to obtain mundane benefits. If they come, the results of all these ritual practices will be destroyed. For this reason, I have not invited them."

Although not invited, the Vrajavasis came to learn that Krsna was coming to Kuruksetra. The Vrajavasis thought, "Kuruksetra is much closer to Vraja-mandala than Dvaraka is. We should avail ourselves of this rare opportunity to see Krsna! We can have darsana of Krsna! We should not miss this chance!"

But they could not venture to go there. Why? They thought, "Krsna has become the Emperor. His standard is very high, and we are merely cowherd men and women. We are poor people. Perhaps Krsna has forgotten us. If we go there, He will not recognize us. Someone of such a high position will not come to see ordinary people like us. Previously He was a cowherd boy in our Vraja-dhama, but now He has become King. But we are extremely grief-stricken. We cannot tolerate this separation."

Thinking like this, the Vrajavasis reasoned, "A man might forget everything else, but he will never forget his parents, even if they live far away. If Nanda Maharaja and Yasoda go there, then Krsna will bow down to them and make obeisances." So they went to Nanda Maharaja, saying, "Krsna is coming to Kuruksetra! We are too grief-stricken with separation grief. We have not seen Him for such a long time, but we do not have the courage to go there. We do not know if Krsna will give us the opportunity to see Him, as His present standard of living is so high. But, if His parents go there, then Krsna will come to them as their son and offer obeisances."

Then Nanda Maharaja and Yasoda said, "No, no. This is not correct. He has not come here for such a long time! He has so many consorts and servants serving Him there. He is so wealthy now. His wives are also wealthy. We are only cowherd men and women. We have nothing. After so long, how can we go? If we go there, will He come to see us? If we go to Kuruksetra and are deprived of

seeing Krsna, we shall die!"

When Krsna, the Emperor of Dvaraka, entered Kuruksetra, so many cavalry units, elephants, horses, etc. accompanied Him. Only those who had permission were allowed to go to speak with Him. He was surrounded by servants. There were four gatekeepers, one in each direction. The King's parents, Vasudeva and Devaki were also there. The brahmanas had gone to start the sacrifices. So, no one was permitted to disturb the King.

Nanda Maharaja, Yasoda Devi and all the cowherd boys and other friends of Krsna approached where He was. Nobody acknowledged them. Armed forces, cavalry and elephants surrounded Krsna.

Nanda Maharaja approached one of the guards. "I have come to see my beloved son," he said.

"Who is your beloved son?" a guard asked him.

"Krsna."

"How is that? You are a poor person. He is the King! His parents are already here-Vasudeva and Devaki. We do not believe you! From where have you come? Why are you claiming that He is your son? We do not believe you!"

Nanda Maharaja cried, "I shall die!"

The guard said, "I am doing my work as per the order of the King. If I do anything against His orders, I shall be dismissed. Do you have a permit?"

"No."

"Then I cannot let you in," the guard replied.

Then all the cowherd boys, carrying their small cow prods, cried, "My friend! My bosom friend! Kanhaiya!"

"What? He is the King! His friends are like this? You are paupers! I do not believe you!"

Then the gopis cried, "We are the consorts of Krsna!"

"What? The consorts are already here. Satyabhama, Rukmini and all the other queens are here! From where have you come? Show me some permit from the King or His Prime Minister!"

Then, Yasoda Devi said, "I told you that, if I go to Kuruksetra and I am deprived of seeing Krsna, I shall die! I have nothing left. My life is finished!" She cried loudly, "Gopala!" and fell unconscious.

At that time, Krsna was with the brahmanas, who requested Him to start the sacrifice. Krsna removed all His royal garments and became a small, naked boy, crying, "Mother! O Mommy! Mommy! Mommy!" He cried and cried and cried and ran to sit on the lap of Yasoda Devi. Now, without Krsna's presence, all the ritual sacrifices were destroyed. By hearing one single call from Yasoda Devi, Krsna could not remain there.

Then Krsna met the gopis and the others. The gopis attracted Krsna. They said, "We are not very happy seeing You here. There are so many cavalrymen, elephants and chariots-we should go to Vrndavana. There, it is sweet. All this is Your majestic aspect. So, please allow us the opportunity to see You in better circumstances by coming with us to Vrndavana. Please do not remain here! "He Gopinatha! He Gopinatha! Vrndavane calo! He Gopinatha!"

In that mood of the gopis, saturated with gopi-bhava, Caitanya Mahaprabhu pulled the chariot from the Jagannatha Temple (Kuruksetra) toward Gundica (Vrndavana). During the chariot festival, Krsna, Baladeva and Subhadra make the trip in three chariots.

The day before the festival, Caitanya Mahaprabhu told the devotees, "You see, Krsna will come to the Gundica Temple tomorrow. You must come with Me and cleanse the temple." "Cleansing the temple" means that you must remove all the thorns and rubbish outside and trim the grass. You must clear the path of any stones and sweep away all the dust with a broom. But it also means that you are to engage your sense organs for the service of Krsna. If you do not engage your sense organs for Him, you will not get Him. For this reason, you have to clear your heart of all desire for the attainment of material benefits, both here and in the hereafter, in heaven. If such desire is there, Krsna will not come.

The desire for non-eternal benefits and emancipation, the desire to merge yourself in formless Brahman, the desire to merge yourself in Paramatma, these sorts of desires will deter you from going to Krsna. Krsna will not come to you. For this reason, you have to clear all of this away-these desires are like hard stones. Outside, you clear them away with brooms, and all the devotees bring earthen pots full of water to wash everything. After this, there should be no desire for name and fame and other such things. All of this should be totally removed. For this reason, Caitanya Mahaprabhu, with the help of His own uttri (the cloth that a sannyasi wears around his neck), scrubbed the inside of the temple. There should not be any kind of material desires within the heart, not even those hidden secretly. Then Krsna will come tomorrow.

Krsna is coming here from the Jagannatha Temple, and you have to clear these unwanted things away. This means that you have to clear your mind. There should be no other desire except desire for Krsna. Krsna is coming to Vrndavana. Krsna is the only Autocrat there. No other ideas, forces or persons should dominate your heart, except Krsna. So, you have to make your heart the same as Vrndavana, where Krsna is solely dominant. He is the Sole Proprietor. Caitanya Mahaprabhu says, "I have made this mind Vrndavana, so that Krsna will be free-free to perform all His pastimes and sporting activities." You have to make your mind Vrndavana. No one else should be allowed to enter, and no other thoughts should be allowed.

(This lecture was originally delivered at the Calcutta branch of Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, the day before Janmastami in the year 2000).
[An excerpt from the chapter "Sanctifying the Heart" in the book "A Taste of Transcendence" by Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaj. In this chapter, Maharaj discusses the inner meaning of Krishna's divine pastimes during both Ratha Yatra festival and Janmastami.]

Sankirtan-Priya Srila Gurudev

In Caiitanya Caritamrita it's written,

atah sri krishna namadi na bhaved grahyam indriyaih
sevonmukhe hi jihvadau svayam eva sphuratyadah

The pastimes of Supreme Lord and His dear associates are beyond the comprehension of a material mind. Only to a soul performing devotional service, They are revealed.

The pastimes, Most Revered Srila Gurudev is performing now, are also beyond the comprehension of medical science. In this instance, in the last few days Srila Gurudev's pulse rate had been on a decline. Dr. Shuvanan Ray, a renowned cardiologist in Eastern India, was invited and visited Srila Guru Maharaja on 17th April evening to examine Srila Gurudev. His first observation was the pulse rate which was only 27. He tried to feel the radial pulse and it could still be found. Dr. Ray expressed surprise that he has not known anyone survive with this low pulse rate! His radial pulse can still be felt? Dr. Ray called it 'mysterious' and 'a miracle'. While leaving, the doctor said, "He cannot be an ordinary person but must be divine!"

Dr. Sushmita echoed the same "I've not known anyone with this pulse rate and blood pressure (60/30) continue to live!" She then said, "I feel the kirtans you are performing must be the reason. Let your kirtans continue." Unbroken Harinam Sankirtan is being performed by devotees for last 4 days, with great enthusiasm throughout day and night.

It seems kirtan-priya Srila Gurudev is pleased by devotees' performing continuous kirtans and is reciprocating to devotee's love, expressed in their kirtans, by performing such miracles. Devotees performing kirtans are rendering best service to Srila Gurudev.

Even in 2013, when Srila Gurudev performed severe illness pastimes in Guwahati, He would not respond to sevaks' greetings and calls on many occasions but as soon as kirtans were played He used to start clapping when he was not exhibiting any external consciousness. On at least three occasions when devotees sang kirtans in front of Him, He waved hands as if appreciating the act and indicating this to be our highest service to Him.

We know how Srila Gurudev at that time had proved the doctors' predictions

wrong on how long patients with His medical condition can survive. Srila Gurudev has defied medical science once again.

This is also an example of His infinite compassion. Even now He is enacting pastimes to teach us the importance of Sankirtana.

Sanskrit Pandita blessed by Mahaprabhu

Once on a full moon night the Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was sitting on the bank of the Ganges with his many students and discussing literary topics. Coincidentally, Keshava Kashmiri Pandita came there. While offering his prayers to mother Ganges, he met Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. The Lord received him with adoration, but because Keshava Kashmiri was very proud, he talked to the Lord very inconsiderately.

He said, "I understand that You are a teacher of grammar and that Your name is Nimai Pandita. People speak very highly of Your teaching of beginner's grammar. I understand that You teach Kalaapa vyaakarana. I have heard that Your students are very expert in the word jugglery of this grammar." The Lord replied, 'Yes, I am known as a teacher of grammar, but factually I cannot impress My students with grammatical knowledge, nor can they understand Me very well." "My dear sir, whereas you are a very learned scholar in all sorts of scriptures and a very much experienced in composing poetry, I am only a boy (Lord was around 11 years of age or so) a new student and nothing more. Therefore I desire to hear your skill in composing poetry. We could hear this if you would mercifully describe the glory of mother Ganges."

When Keshava Kashmiri, heard this, he became more puffed up, and within one hour he composed one hundred verses describing mother Ganges. The Lord praised him, "There is no greater poet than you in the entire world. Your poetry is so difficult that no one can understand it but you and mother Sarasvati, the

goddess of learning. But if you may explain the meaning of one verse, we can all hear it from your own mouth and thus be very happy."

Keshava Kashmiri inquired which verse Lord wanted to be explained. The Lord then recited one of the hundred verses Keshava Kashmiri had composed.

Mahattvam gangaayah satatam idam aabhaati nitaraam
Yad eshaa shri-vishnosh carana-kamalotpatti-subhagaa
Dvitiya-shri-lakshmir iva sura-narair arcya-caranaa
Bhavaani-bhartur yaa shirasi vibhavaty adbhuta-gunaa

(The greatness of mother Ganges always exists brilliantly. She is the most fortunate because she emanated from the Lotus Feet of Sri Vishnu, the Personality of Godhead. She is the second goddess of fortune, and therefore she is always worshipped both by demigods and by humanity. Endowed with all wonderful qualities, she flourishes on the head of Lord Shiva.)

When Lord Chaitanya asked him to explain the meaning of this verse, the champion, was astonished and he inquired from the Lord, 'I recited all the verses like the blowing wind. How could You completely learn by heart even one among those verses?' Lord replied, 'By the grace of the Lord someone may become great poet, and similarly by His grace someone else may become a great 'shruti-dhara' (one who can memorize anything immediately).'

Satisfied thus, the Brahmin, Keshava Kashmiri explained the quoted verse. Then the Lord said, 'Now kindly explain the special qualities and faults in the verse.' The Brahmin said, 'There is not a tinge of fault in that verse. Rather, it has the good qualities of similies and alliteration.' Lord replied, 'Sir, I may say something to you if you will not become angry. Can you explain the fault in this verse? There is no doubt that your poetry is full of ingenuity, and certainly it has satisfied the Supreme Lord. Yet if we scrutinizingly consider it we can find both good qualities and faults. Now, therefore, let's carefully scrutinize this verse.' The Brahmin said, 'Yes, the verse You have recited is perfectly correct. You are an ordinary student of grammar. What do You know about literary embellishments? You cannot review this poetry because You do not know anything about it.'

Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said, 'Because I am not on your level, I have asked you to teach Me by explaining the faults and good qualities in your poetry.

Certainly I have not studied the art of literary embellishments. But I have heard about it from higher circles, and thus I can review this verse and find in it many faults and many good qualities.' The Brahmin poet said, "All right, let me see what good qualities and faults you have found."

The Lord replied, 'Let Me speak, and please hear Me without becoming angry. In this verse there are five faults and five literary ornaments. Kindly hear Me and then give your judgment. In this verse the fault of avimrishta-vidheyaamsa occurs twice and the faults of viruddha-mati, bhagna-krama and punar-aatta occur once each. The glorification of the Ganges is the principal unkown subject matter in this verse, and the known subject matter is indicated by the word 'idam', which has been placed after the unknown. Because you have placed the known subject at the end and that which is unknown at the beginning, the composition is faulty and the meaning of the words become doubtful.'

'In the word 'dvitiya-shri-lakshami', the quality of being a second Lakshmi is the unknown. In making this compound word, the meaning became secondary and the originally intended meaning was lost. Because the word 'dvitiya' is the unknown, in its combination in this compound word the intended meaning of equality with Lakshmi is lost. Not only is there the fault avimrishta-visheyamsa, there is also another fault, which I shall point out to you.'

'Here is another great fault. You have arranged the word 'bhavaani-bhartri' to your great satisfaction, but this betrays the fault of contradiction. The word 'bhavaani' means 'the wife of Lord Shiva'. But when we mention her husband, one might conclude that she has another husband. It is contradictory to hear that Lord Shiva's wife has another husband. The use of such words in literature creates the fault called viruddha-mati-krit.'

'The statement by the word 'vibhavati' is complete. Qualifying it with the adjective 'adbhuta-guna' creates the fault of redundancy. There is extraordinary alliteration in three lines of the verse, but in one line there is no such alliteration. This is the fault of deviation. Although there are five literary ornaments decorating this verse, the entire verse has been spoiled by these five most faulty presentations. If there are ten literary ornaments in a verse but even one faulty expression, the entire verse is nullified. One's beautiful body may be decorated with jewels, but one spot of white leprosy makes the entire body abominable.'

'Similarly an entire poem is made useless by a fault, despite alliteration, similies

and metaphors. Now hear the description of the five literary embellishments. There are two ornaments of sound and three ornaments of meaning. There is a sound ornament of alliteration in three lines. And in the combination of the words 'shri' and 'lakshmi' there is the ornament of tinge of redundancy.'

'In the arrangement of the first line the letter 'ta' occurs five times, and the arrangement of the third line repeats the letter 'ra' five times. In the fourth line the letter 'bha' occurs four times. This arrangement of alliteration is a pleasing ornamental use of sounds. Although the words 'shri' and 'lakshmi' convey the same meaning and are therefore almost redundant, they are nevertheless not redundant. Describing Lakshmi as possessed of shri offers a difference in meaning with a tinge of repetition. This is the second ornamental use of words. The use of words 'lakshmir iva' manifests the ornament of meaning called upama. There is also the further ornament of meaning called virodhabhasa.'

'Everyone knows that lotus flowers grow in the water of the Ganges. But to say that Ganges takes birth from a lotus flower seems extremely contradictory. The existence of mother Ganges begins from the lotus feet of Lord. Although this statement that water comes from a lotus flower is a contradiction, in connection with Lord Vishnu, it is a great wonder. In this birth of Ganges by the inconceivable potency of the Lord, there is no contradiction although it appears contradictory. Everyone knows that lotus flowers grow in the water but water never grows from a lotus. All such contradictions, however, are wonderfully possible in Krishna: the great river Ganges has grown from His lotus feet.'

'The real glory of mother Ganges is that she has grown from the lotus feet of Lord Vishnu. Such a hypothesis is another ornament, called anumana.'

'I have simply discussed the five gross faults and five literary embellishments of this verse, but if we consider it in fine detail we will find unlimited faults. You have achieved poetic imagination and ingenuity by the grace of your worship-able demigod. But poetry not well reviewed is certainly subject to criticism. Poetic skills used with due consideration is very pure, and with metaphors and analogies it is dazzling.'

After hearing such from Lord Chaitanya, the poet was wonder-struck. He was stunned and could not say anything. He then began to consider in his mind that this boy has blocked my intelligence. I can therefore understand that mother Sarasvati has become angry with me. The wonderful explanation given by this

boy is not possible for a human being. Therefore mother Sarasvati must have spoken personally through His mouth. He then said, 'Dear Nimai Pandita! Hearing Your explanation, I am simply struck with wonder. You are not a literary student and do not have long experience in studying scriptures. How have you been able to explain all these critical points?' Mahaprabhu replied, 'I do not know what is good composition and what is bad. But whatever I have spoken must be understood to have been spoken by mother Sarasvati.' Upon hearing this, poet sorrowfully wondered why mother Sarasvati wanted to defeat him through a small boy.

When the poetic champion was thus defeated, all the Lord's disciples sitting there began to laugh loudly. But Lord Chaitanya asked them not to do so and He told the poet, "Your are the most learned scholar and the topmost of all great poets, for otherwise how could such fine poetry come from your mouth? Even in the poetic compositions of such great poets as Bhavabhuti, Jayadeva and Kalidasa there are many examples of faults. Such mistakes should be considered negligible. One should see only how such poets have displayed their poetic power. I am not even fit to be your disciple. Therefore kindly do not take seriously whatever childish impudence I have shown. Please go home, and tomorrow we may meet again so that I may hear discourses on the scriptures from your mouth. Then all went to their respective places of stay.

Poet worshiped mother Sarasvati at night. In a dream the goddess informed him of Lord's position, and the poetic champion could understand that Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. The next morning he came to Lord Chaitanya and surrendered unto His lotus feet. The Lord bestowed His mercy upon him and cut off all his bondage to material attachment. The poetic champion was certainly most fortunate. His life was successful by dint of his vast learning and erudite scholarship, and thus he attained the shelter of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Sarvabhauma's Faith in Mahaprasadam

One day not long afterward Sarvabhauma had become Lord's devotee, *Mahaprabhu* came to Sarvabhauma's house with *Lord Jagannath's Maha Prasad* and offered the *prasad* to him. Sarvabhauma had not yet bathed, cleaned his teeth or performed his morning rituals. Despite his ritually impure state, he joyfully honored the *prasad*, quoting a verse from the Padma-purana:

shushkam paryushitam vapi
nitam va dura-deshatah
prapti-matrena bhoktavyam
natra kala-vicarana

"One should honor *prasad* as soon as one receives *prasad*, whether *prasad* is dried up, stale or brought from afar. In this, there should be no consideration of time or circumstances.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.6.225)

Mahaprabhu was delighted to see that Sarvabhauma had developed faith in *maha prasad* and immediately started to dance in ecstasy. Sarvabhauma joined him and the two danced madly, shedding tears and trembling in their divine joy. Mahaprabhu said,

"Today I have been transported beyond the three worlds and have been taken to Vaikuntha. All my desires have been fulfilled simply because Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya has developed faith in *maha prasad. (Chaintanya Charitamrita 2.6.230-1)*

On 20 March 08.

Service To Visnu And Vaisnava

Ki Rupe Paiba Seva Mui Duracara - "How can a miscreant like me obtain

devotional service?"

Wherever we go, our only duty is to serve Visnu and vaisnava. We do not have any other duty. Our life is only meant for serving Visnu and vaisnava. One should please the Supreme Lord by always hearing hari-katha, performing kirtana, or engaging in any other service. There is much more service to do after becoming liberated. Srila Guru Maharaj jokingly says that those who are afraid of doing service cannot come to the line of bhakti; especially the bhakti lineage of Gaudiya Vaisnavas.

They may do "soham-soham" in a jnani lineage and merge into Brahman. But in our line of pure devotion, one has to serve the devotees and the Supreme Lord now and after liberation also. By performing service one gets the object of service and love for Him. Sri Nanda Maharaj, Mother Yasoda, Radharani, and all other devotees are always engaged in the service of the Supreme Lord.

Bhagavata dharma or bhakti dharma is very easy and difficult also. One who follows the path of bhagavata dharma has no fear of falling down because the Supreme Lord Himself is his savior and sustainer. "na skhalet patet iha": Even while walking with one's eyes closed, one will not slip or fall. But one needs some courage to follow the path of bhagavata dharma. Here, whatever you speak using your tongue, whatever you think using your mind, and whatever you do using your senses should all be done in relationship to the Supreme Lord. "Narayana - iti samarpayet", everything should be offered to Narayana; everything should be done for Narayana. Bhagavata dharma demands full surrender. If we do not offer our mind, senses, and sense objects to the Supreme Knowable Truth, Saccidananda Sri Krsna, we will leave behind our highest good and go towards the non-eternal. We will then become more entangled in the temporary world. We should understand that I am of the Supreme Lord, I am of Krsna, I am His eternal servant but I have forgotten Him and I have left His service. I have come to this material world and I am now suffering from the threefold afflictions.

What should I do now? Having forgotten Him and abandoned His service, I am now suffering. So I should remember Him and render service to Him with complete surrender. Then my miseries will be over and I will get transcendental happiness. This is bhagavata dharma. In other words, you should surrender to Him who you belong to and remain for Him. This is your only happiness. You do not need dharma-artha-kama. You need krsna prema. Therefore, not only do

pure devotees not ask the Supreme Lord for dharma-artha-kama of this world; they do not ask for even liberation. They only ask the Supreme Lord for devotion to Him and His service.

A mother naturally feeds her child, puts him to sleep, gives him a bath and even cleans his stool. She does not feel bad doing all these; she actually feels happiness, even though there is no pure affection here. Mother Yasoda has pure affection for Gopalaji. Mother Yasoda's Gopala does not become old like other children of the material world; neither does He die. This kind of love is pure transcendental happiness. When Brahmaji kidnapped the calves and cowherd boys, Krsna expanded Himself into cowherd boys and calves exactly the same in appearance and nature as the real calves and cowherd boys. While discussing the pastimes of Sri Krsna, Srila Gurudeva explained a few lines of a wonderful bhajana of Srila Narottama Dasa Thakura:

bisaye bhuliya andha hainu diba-nisi
gale phansa dite phire maya se pisaci>

I have no devotion for either Visnu or vaisnava, I have become averse to them and have become blind by constantly meditating on the objects of the senses. Maya has placed a hangman's noose around my neck.

ihare kariya jaya chadana na jaya
sadhu-krpa bina ara nahika upaya

Nobody can win over maya's illusion without the mercy of sadhu and guru. By their mercy we can get emancipation from this world; we can win over maya and obtain the service of the Supreme Lord. But we are not associating with them. We have not developed any affection for them. So how shall we be rescued from this world?

ki-rupe paiba seva mui duracara
sri-guru-vaisnave rati na haila amara

How shall we get service to Visnu and vaisnava? I have no devotion for either Visnu or the vaisnavas. We are not seeing the vaisnavas as vaisnava; not seeing the guru as guru. We have the false feeling that "I am the only vaisnava; there is no other vaisnava in this world." How can I get any service like this? Service can only be given by sadguru and vaisnava. Sadguru and vaisnava are the mercy

incarnation of the Supreme Lord. The Lord in the form of guru or vaisnava gives us the opportunity to serve. Without His mercy our spiritual progress is zero.

guru krsna-rupa hana sastrera pramane
guru-rupe krsna krpa karena bhakta-gane

You cannot separate the spiritual master from Krsna. It is said in Caitanya-Caritamrta, "Lord Krsna in the form of the spiritual master shows mercy to the living entities." Therefore one should pray to the vaisnavas:

adosada-rasi-prabhu patita-uddhara
ei-bara narottame karaha nistara

Narottama Thakuraji sang this kind of prayer for our benefit. "O vaisnava thakura, I am the greatest offender. Please do not see my faults. You are the rescuer of the fallen; kindly rescue this fallen soul also."

Therefore guru and vaisnava are everything for us. Only they can rescue us from the cycle of repeated births and deaths and award us devotional service to their worshipable Lord. Serving Visnu and vaisnava is our only dharma. Our life should only be meant for this. That is why wherever we go, we do only one thing: service to Visnu and vaisnavas.

Sitadevi, the internal potency of Lord Sri Ramachandra

King Janaka’s daughter, Sita, had not been born from the womb and was equally as endowed as the Lord with transcendental qualities of form, beauty, age, behaviour, and nature just like Sree Lakshmi.

At Sita’s svayamvara (the assembly where Mother Sita was to choose Her husband), in the midst of all the heroes, Lord Sri Ramacandra playfully lifted the immensely heavy bow of Lord Siva (Hara-dhanu), which was brought in by three hundred men. He then bent and strung it and broke it in everyone’s presence. After breaking the Hara-dhanu at the svayamvara, the Lord gained King Janaka’s daughter Sita.

Sri Rama’s internal potency, Sitadevi, although instructed repeatedly by Sri Ramacandra not to go with Him to the forest (as this punishment was meant for Him and not for Her or anyone else), left behind all comforts for the service of Her husband. By this action, She defined the duty of a chaste wife and exhibited the ideal of following the husband. Supreme Lord Sri Ramacandra was completely fascinated by the pure love of Sitadevi, which surpassed all His expectations, but in order to teach the dharma of a king who is engaged in the welfare of the citizens, and although giving pain to Himself, He asked for the ordeal by fire (Agni-pariksha) and declared the injunction of banishment of Sitadevi who is non-different from His own self.

Once, arrangements were being made for an Asvamedha-yajna under the priesthood of Vasishtha and other sages. The wife of the person to perform the Asvamedha yajna has to be initiated in the yajna before the husband. Because of this rule, it was proposed that Sri Ramacandra get married again, but Sri Ramacandra rejected the proposal and arranged to have a golden Deity of Sita instead. He was given yajna initiation, along with the golden Deity of Sita as His wife. What can be a better example of Sitadevi’s most excellent chastity and love than this?

--- *Excerpts from the book* ***Dasavatara*** *by His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj.*

Speciality of this Kaliyuga

It has been emphatically stated in the authentic scriptures of India, the world situation will have gradual deterioration from piety- righteousness in the four ages- Satya, Treta, Dwapar and Kali. The first of the 4 ages was 'Satyayuga'- 'Golden age', which was adorned prominently with four virtues- penance, sanctity, compassion and truth. Next deteriorated age was 'Tretayuga'- 'Silver age', which was adorned prominently with three virtues sanctity, compassion and truth, one quality 'penance' was less. Third deteriorated age was 'Dwaparyuga' or 'Bronze age' which was adorned with compassion and truth- two qualities penance and sanctity were less. Last fourth age was 'Kaliyuga'- 'Iron age', which is prominently devoid of three virtues- penance, sanctity and compassion, only 'truth' exists but insignificantly.

As per scriptural evidence, we human beings are now in the grip of terrible unrighteousness- (tamaguna) Violence and cruelty are predominant now- the whole world is in the grip of horrible malevolence and jealousy. In one sense it is true we human beings of Kaliyuga in this world are most unfortunate.

But according to Indian scriptural evidence, human beings who have got the opportunity to be born in this Kaliyuga of the seventh Manvantar are supremely fortunate. Span of life of Kaliyuga is 4 lacs 32 thousand years. Double of Kaliyuga is the span of life of Dwaparyuga. Triple of the span of life of Kaliyuga is the span of life of Tretayuga and span of life of Satyayuga is four times more than that of Kaliyuga. Total span of life of four ages is 43 lacs 20 thousand years. Span of life of four ages multiplied by 71 is equal to the span of life of one Manu. One day of the creator Brahma is equal to the spans of lives of 14 Manus. The present Kaliyuga of the seventh Manu or Vaivasvata Manu is very significant in the sense that Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu- The Combined Manifestation of Radha-Krishna, The Most Munificent Form of Godhead appeared and distributed highest Krishna Prema- transcendental divine love of the highest order- the highest blisss to all irrespective of caste, creed and religion.

Sree Krishna The Most Sweet Form of Godhead who appeared in Dwaparyuga just before this Kaliyuga and had his pastimes only with his personal associates, did not distribute that highest Krishna Prema to anybody.

Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu also taught the easiest way of getting Krishna-

Prema by chanting the Holy Name without tenfold offences. He has taught in His own writing of eight verses, which is renowned as 'Shikshashtaka'. He has taught in the third verse, how one can do Harinam without offence- *'Trinadapi sunicena tarorapi sahishnuna amanina manadena kirtaniyah sada harih'*.The votary should be humbler than the blade of grass, more forbearing than tree, should not aspsire for name and fame, but pay respect to all thinking that our object of worship- Sree Krishna is residing in the hearts of all.

By the fruits we can understand whether we are performing bhajan actually or not. As we have got relative independence, we can do good and bad deeds as per good and bad use of our relative independence, but we cannot get the desired fruits according to our sweet will. Supreme Lord controls the fruits. We cannot do good and bad deeds without His knowledge.

Our Most Revered Gurudeva and Most Revered Grand Gurudeva established Maths out of compassion for the conditioned souls to give them scope to worship Sree Krishna and His devotees. The holy place is not meant for amassing money or quarrelling to get mundane benefits. Sinful persons may enter into holy places with some sinister motive to get mundane benefits in the present disturbed situation of the world.

Seeing the present disturbed situation, responsible well-wishers of the holy places should take proper steps to protect those places for the benefit of the sincere aspirants and votaries. We should very carefully think that any moment we can lose this valuable human birth. Nothing will go with us except pure devotion to Supreme Lord. *'Muthi bandhe aya jagat mein, hath pasare jayaga'* - We came in this world with cupped palm and we shall have to leave this world with empty palm. It is extremely ridiculous and shameful for a so-called ascetic demanding false vanity of the ownership of money and property donated by others. Even Ambarish Maharaj, autocrat legitimate king of the whole world, had no attachment to his worldly property. It is by utter ignorance that persons enveloped by illusory energy of Supreme Lord think themselves as proprietors of worldly property and wealth. It is stated by Sree Vedavyas Muni in the 9th Canto of Srimad Bhagavat about the ideal holy life of Ambarish Maharaj that those who demand ownership of property even in worldly sense which may be legitimately earned, will go to inferno. Sree Gaudiya Math's teachings is Rupanuga Bhakti. Srila Rupa Goswami has warned the bona fide votaries in his writing 'Upadeshamrita'- first two verses-

(1) *vaco vegam manasa krodha vegam jihva vegam udaropastha vegam, etan vegan ya visaheta dhirah sarvam apimam prthivim sa sisyat*

(2) *atyaharah prayasas ca prajalpo niyamagrhah, jana-sangas ca laulyam ca sadbhir bhaktir vinasyati.*

He has given a strong warning for false vanity of being a bona fide devotee without the foundation of practical spiritual life. Even we have got no hold over our own physical bodies- gross body and subtle body, as well as our real self Atma. Those are the products of the Apara and Para potencies of Supreme Lord Sree Krishna as per evidence of the Gita. Everything belongs to Supreme Lord.

Specialty of this Kaliyuga of the seventh Manavantar

It has been emphatically stated in the authentic scriptures of India, the world situation will have gradual deterioration from piety— righteousness in the four ages— Satya, Treta, Dwapar and Kali. The first of the 4 ages was 'Satyayuga'— 'Golden age', which was adorned prominently with four virtues— penance, sanctity, compassion and truth. Next deteriorated age was 'Tretayuga'— 'Silver age', which was adorned prominently with three virtues – sanctity, compassion and truth, one quality 'penance' was less. Third deteriorated age was 'Dwaparyuga' or 'Brazen age' which was adorned with compassion and truth— two qualities penance and sanctity were less. Last fourth age was 'Kaliyuga'— 'Iron age', which is prominently devoid of three virtues— penance, sanctity and compassion, only 'truth' exists but insignificantly. As per scriptural evidence, we human beings are now in the grip of terrible unrighteousness— (tamaguna) Violence and cruelty are predominant now— the whole world is in the grip of horrible malevolence and jealousy. In one sense it is true we human beings of Kaliyuga in this world are most unfortunate.
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(2) atyaharah prayasas ca prajalpo niyamagrhah, jana-sangas ca laulyam ca sadbhir bhaktir vinasyati. He has given a strong warning for false vanity of being a bona fide devotee without the foundation of practical spiritual life. Even we have got no hold over our own physical bodies— gross body and subtle body, as well as our real self Atma. Those are the products of the Apara and Para potencies of Supreme Lord Sree Krishna as per evidence of the Gita. Everything belongs to Supreme Lord.
It will be unfortunate for us all if we do not properly and sincerely endeavour to maintain the dignity of Maths established by our Most Revered Grand Gurudeva, Founder of the worldwide Sree Chaitanya and Sree Gaudiya Maths as well as Revered Gurudeva, Founder of All-India Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Math Registered Institution.

Spiritual Interpretations

alpam va vahuva
yasya shrutasyo
pakaroti yah,
tamapeeha gurum

vidyachchhrutopakriyaya
taya. (Manu 2/149)
As per scriptural prescript, one, who imparts a bit or sufficient knowledge of the Vedas to deserving aspirant for his eternal benefit is termed ‘Guru’.

gukarashchandhakarah
syat
rukaratannirodhakah,
andhakara nirodhitvat
gururityabhi dheeyate.
(Visvasar-tantra)

‘Gu’ syllable of the word Guru denotes darkness (nescience) and the syllable ‘Ru’ denotes removal of darkness (nescience). One who removes darkness-ignorance is stated Guru.

gukarashchandhakarah
syat rukarasteja
uchyate,
ajnana nashakam
brahma gurureva na
samshayah (Visvasar-
tantra)

‘Gu’ syllable signifies darkness-ignorance and ‘Ru’ syllable light. Therefore, it is true undoubtedly self-effulgent Para-Brahma whose light removes darkness-ignorance is Guru.

ajnanatimirandhasya jnananjanashalakaya
chakshurunmeelitam yena tasmai shri gurave
namah

-(Gaudiya Kanthahar)

My prostrated obeisances to Shri Gurudeva who opens my blind eyes removing dark nescience with the help of the eyesalve-stem of Divine Knowledge.

sakshad-dharitvena samasta-
sastrair- uktas tatha bhavyata
eva sadbhih kintu prabhor yah
priya eva tasya vande guroh
sricharanaravindam (Vishvanath
Chakravarty)

'The Spiritual Master is to be honoured as much as the Supreme Lord because He is the most Confident Servitor of the Lord. This is acknowledged

in all revealed scriptures and followed by all authorities. I offer my respectful obeisances unto the Lotus Feet of such a Spiritual Master, who is a bona fide representative of Sri Hari.'

[Spiritual Master (Gurudeva) is one with Supreme Lord Sri Hari in the sense that He is His dearest. Gurudev is not Enjoyer Bhagavan, but He is the Most Confidential Servitor. As such Tulasi (basil) leaf is offered on the Lotus Feet of Sri Hari, but not on the Lotus Feet of Gurudeva; it is offered on the upper portion of His Spiritual Body-on His Hands.]

yasya prasada˜ bhagava˜
prasado yasyaprasadannagat…h
kutopi dhyayamstuvamstasya
yashastrisandhyaˆ vande guroh
sri charanaravindam

-(Vishvanath Chakravarty)

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the Lotus Feet of Spiritual Master after meditating and singing in adoration His Glories in the morning, at midday and afternoon, by whose Grace I can get the Grace of Sri Hari (Supreme Lord) and without His Grace and compassion I have got no shelter.

sri gurucharanapadma
kevalabhakatisadma bando mui
savadhana mate
jaharo prasade bhai a bhava
tariya jai krishna prapti hoi
jaha hoite
gurumukha padmavakhya chittete
kariya aikya ar na kariha mane asha
sri gurucharane rati ei se
uttama gat… je prasade pure
sarva asha
chakhu dano dila jei janme janme
prabhu sei divya jnan hride
prokashita
premabhakt… jaha haite avidya
vinasha jate vede gaya jahara
charita
-(Srila Narottam Thakur)

The Lotus Feet of His Divine Grace Sri Gurudeva is the abode of exclusive devotion. I chant the glories of Sri Gurudeva in devout adoration. I can cross the ocean of births and deaths as well as can get Sri Krishna by His unfathomable Grace. I should be satisfied by reconciling the nectarious sayings emerging from the lotus-lips of Gurudeva with the thoughts of my

mind, nothing more can I expect to get. Devotion to the Lotus Feet of Sri Gurudeva is the highest objective. All desires can be fulfilled by His Grace. By whose Grace I have got spiritual eye to see God, Divine Transcendental Knowledge is revealed in me. I have got Prembhakti, my ignorance is removed, such Gurudeva may become my Eternal Divine Master in every birth. Transcendental Pastimes of Gurudeva have been narrated in the Vedas.

There is a hearsay, one community in India does not acknowledge Guru (a Head for spiritual guide). According to them God is the only Guru and all others are god-brothers. The eldest god-brother is called ‘Dada Guru’.

[Dada = elder brother]. This sort of conclusion is neither rational nor supported by scriptures. We find in this world, we accept authorities or experts in all matters. When we are acknowledging ‘Guru’ in every sphere, it is absurd to say we need not require the help of Guru to know ‘God’ Who is beyond human comprehension. Those, who say like this, are really not serious to know God. The indispensability for accepting Guru for God-realisation is substantiated by scriptural evidence.

Acharyavan
purusho veda
(Chhandogya
Upanishad)

The person initiated ‘by Guru’ can only know Para-Brahma (God).

uttisthata jagrata
prapya varan
nivodhata
kshurasya dhara nishita
duratya ya durgam pathastat
kavayo vadanti
-*(Kathopanishad)*

Veda (Divinity Himself) is giving beneficial instruction to the sadhus - 'O sadhus! Rise up (withdraw your material senses from the material objects completely), awake (be reinstated in your own real self), sincerely endeavour to know God praying grace of great saints. This world is as sharp as razor,- full of miseries, as such very difficult to get deliverance. It is impossible to cross the ocean of births and deaths without worship of Divinity. The realised saints say without careful zealous efforts nobody can get God-realisation, the panacea of the malady of worldly afflictions, i.e. nobody can cross the ocean of births and deaths without worship of God, taking absolute shelter at the Lotus Feet of Gurudeva.

Even Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, Sri Gaurhari, Lord Ramachandra played the pastimes of accepting Guru to teach indispensability of accepting Guru. Sri Krishna, Sri Gaurhari, Sri Ramachandra accepted Sandipani Muni, Sri Iswarapuripad and Sri Vasishtha Muni respectively as Spiritual Guides.

Extracts of the sermons delivered by His Divine Grace of Om Vishnupad 108 Sri Srimat Bhakti Dayita Madhava Goswami Maharaj, Founder of Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math Registered Organisation on the Holy Day of His Advent on Utthan Ekadashi Tithi in 1967 at Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, 35, Satish Mukherjee Road, Calcutta-26 :-

To me Gurudeva manifests Himself in four forms, viz :-

(1) Gu + Ru - Who destroys ignorance. Appearance of Absolute Knowledge Bhagavan removes ignorance. Hence, Original Guru is Bhagavan.

1. He who has engaged me in the service of Bhagavan directly is the second appearance of my Srila Gurudeva Most Revered Nityalilapravishta Prabhupad Srimat Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Gosvami Thakur, Founder of the world-wide Sri Chaitanya Math and Sri Gaudiya Math Organisation.

2. Vaishnavas are the third appearance of Gurudeva. What do they do? As Gurudeva always engages His disciples in the service of His object of worship, vaishnavas also do the same.

3. Disciples are the fourth manifestation of Guru. They, as disciples, actually do the work of a Guru, i.e. they engage myself always in the service of Gurudeva. There is no scope of doing any anti-devotional act of violation. If there is any violation, they will detect it. Hence, disciples are also my Guruvarga. Disciples perform Gurupuja by singing the glories of

Gurudeva, I perform Gurupuja by hearing. But by hearing the glories, if I have got the evil motive of misappropriating it, it will not be Gurupuja. As chanting is bhakti, hearing is also bhakti. In whatever way devotees may express their hearts, they are all my objects of worship.

Message of His Divine Grace Nityalilapravishta Om 108 Sri Srimat Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Gosvami Thakur on the Holy day (Krishna-Panchami Tithi) of His fiftieth Advent Anniversary at Sri Gaudiya Math, Ultadanga Road, Calcutta. [Sermons were delivered in

Bengali. It is difficult to understand the inner deep significance of His esoteric instructive message.]

‘’Redeemer Sympathisers!

My Sri Gurudeva is manifestation of the pastimes of Vishnuvigraha (Godhead) as His Absolute Counterpart Servitor. Though He is God’s dearest Vishnuvigraha, yet He is dwelling in the hearts of all living beings of the world in the form of a vaishnava to rescue a fallen soul like me.

Gurudeva in Human Form, the best amongst all living beings, is my only object of worship. As perfect man in spite of His being Servitor of the Highest Object of worship of vaishnavas, His relation with Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is inconceivable simultaneous distinction and non-distinction. In consideration of His non-distinction aspect, His Form is the highest object of worship. Visible world is eager to serve Him, but a man like me who is averse to God, is satisfied in thinking Gurudeva a perfect man. Human beings, as devotees of that perfect man, are all vaishnavas. They are manifestations of my Gururdeva in various forms. Positively they are my Guruvarga and instructors, negatively they are the persons, who at the time of their performing bhajan are very much eager to hear delirium from an abominable wretched person like me. It seems to me I am capable of reciting what I have heard from Sri Gurudeva along with them unitedly. I have got no audacity to teach the world; because peculiar characteristics of Vishnu-vaishnav-tattva are incomprehensible.
Although they are eternally distinct, they are at the same time non

distinct which is inconceivable.

I have heard from Gurudeva that all objects of worship, all kinds of worshipper and worship are eternally incorporated in Absolute Undivided Knowledge (Advaijnan) Sri Krishna. In spite of their incorporation in Sri Krishna, they are eternal manifestations of variegatedness attached with divine pastimes. Myself and other living beings who are averse to Hari-Guru-Vaishnav (Supreme Lord-Spiritual Guide-Devotee) like me are deviated from Eternal Truth due to their forgetfulness of the knowledge of eternal variegated divine pastimes, even I have got no capacity correctly to understand why I have become deviated. In the context of my feeling eternity, I am eternal servant of Sri Krishna. I have lost remembrance that I am eternal servant of Sri Krishna, as I have fallen into the pit of misconception of self.

The knowledge that I am the marginal potency of Sri Krishna is now in a dormant state due to above drawback. Hence, I have got this assumption that Absolute Bliss can be attained by aversion to the service of Sri Vrajendra Nandan Sri Krishna (son of Nanda Maharaj). Who is All-powerful and All-knowledge. But that sort of anti-devotional attitude is opposed to variegatedness of Eternal Divine Pastimes. I shall commit a blunder in thinking ‘Mayavad contention’ as ‘Brahmajnan’.

That wrong assumption misdirects me and deprives me from the service of Gurudeva forever. I am unable to comprehend simultaneous distinction and non-distinction of my existence. ‘Dva Suparna’-three mantras of Sruti have not been subject-matter of my discussion. I commit offence at the Lotus Feet of Sri Sridhar Swami, who is one with Vishnuswami, sustainer of pure devotion, when I do not discern in their teachings manifestation of simultaneous distinction and non-distinction due to forgetfulness of real self.

I have been deprived from the loving service of my Most Beloved by confusing Pure Non- Dualism with Absolute Monism. I am avoiding the procedure of getting Transcendental Divine Knowledge descending through preceptorial channel--disciplic channel or Self- Effulgent Knowledge of the Vedas. As such I have imbibed in me false material ego of becoming a judge to determine right and wrong by inviting deep nescience due to lack of ontological devotional knowledge. It is for this reason only as a non-vedist :

(1) I commit offence at the lotus feet of vaishnavas by going to exaggerate efficacy of the Doctrine of action (Karma-Vichar);

(2) I conclude ‘Pancha-ratra system’ as anti-vedic;

(3) I do harm to my eternal welfare by observing objects of worship-Sankarshan, Pradyumna and Anirudha as distinct from Vasudeva;

(4) I have imbibed in me belief in Absolute Monism due to my offence at the Lotus Feet of Shandilya Rishi.

Sripad Purnaprajna Anandatirtha Madhvamuni (Sri Madhvacharya) has blessed me by manifesting his allegiance to Vedavyas in this adverse situation. I am unable to express the extent of his grace unto me for my eternal benefit. Sri Gaursundar distributed bountifully to all His associates the sincere endeavour to serve the object of worship which has been inherited from Sri Madhavendrapuripad and preserved by him in the heart of Sri Ishwarpuripad. I was so long averse to Sri Hari due to my reluctance to serve the Lotus Feet of Sri (Raghunath) Das Gosvami, embodiment of esoteric bhajan. (Raghunath) Das Gosvami’s Bhajan under the benign guidance of Srila Rupa Gosvami, who expanded the Gospel of Divine Love, is conspicuous.

Sri Jiva Gosvami, following the footprints of Sri Sanatan Gosvami, pulled me by the hair and placed me on the Lotus Feet of Raghunath Das and Svarup Damodar as their eternal servant. I have got the opportunity to realise Sri Gurudeva as non-different from the Lotus Feet of Sri Narottam Thakur in view of my being blessed in getting the privilege of hearing apophthegm flowing from the holy pen of Srila Kaviraj Goswami. I am a wretched insignificant creature of the world. Sri Vishvanath Chakravarthy is making the gesture of invoking Vyasapuja in one form or other by various alternative means to resist me from going astray. Vedantacharya Sri Baladev Vidyabhushan, who made the pastimes of appearing as Guru to infuse divine power to Sri Madhusudan Das and Sri Uddhav Das, has rescued me from the menace of the path of logical altercation by pronouncing propriety of Vedic knowledge descending through preceptorial channel. Sri Vishvanath Chakravarthy is perceived by his associates as custodian of the world. In that context Sri Vishvanath appeared as Absolute Counterpart - Grace - incarnate of Lord to resist me in my attempt to know the Truth through empiricism Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur , Absolute Counterpart - Krishnavigraha, who is non-different from Krishna Dvaipayan Vedavyasmuni has given me shelter at Vrajapattan (at Chandrashekhar Acharyya Bhavan - the Holy Place of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu’sVrajlila) inside Nabadwip by His pen and devotional practice.

-- First Part of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada's Vakritabali (series of speeches delivered).

Sree Baladeva Vidyabhushan

Sree Baladeva Vidyabhushan when convinced of the supremacy of the Gaudiya Vaishnava philosophy took initiation from Radha Damodar Goswami. He was thus initiated in Nityananda Prabhu's line. The following is his disciplic succession: Gauri Das Pandita > Hriday Chaitanya Prabhu > Shyamananda Prabhu > Rasikananda Deva Goswami > Nayanananda Goswami > Radha Damodar Goswami > Baladeva Vidyabhushan.

Baladeva continued his studies of the Gaudiya literature under Pitambar Das and later studied the Bhagwat Purana under Vishvanath Chakravarti. He also took the Vaishnava vairagi's dress, at which time he was given the name Ekanti Govinda Das.

Baladeva was ordered by Vishvanath Chakravarti Thakur to go to jaipur where he prayed to Rupa Goswami's Govindaji murti for the authorization to write a commentary on the Vedanta Sutra. He then composed the Govinda-bhasya and took it to Galta where he defeated the other sampradayas in debate, preserving the reputation of the Gaudiya School. After this episode, he was given the title Vidyabhushan.

In the succession of bona fide gurus, which make up the Brahma-Madhva-Gaudiya-Saraswata sampradaya, Baladeva Vidyabhushan is to be remembered regularly. Simply demonstrating a connection through initiation to a family succession of initiating spiritual masters does not make one a bonafide guru. One must demonstrate complete dedication to the Supreme Truth, brahma-nishtha. Only a pure devotee can be called a bona fide guru. Therefore Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati wrote, "I pay obeisance's to Vishvanath and all his disciples like Baladeva, Baladeva's disciple Jagannath and his dear most follower

Bhaktivinode Thakur."

Sree Devananda Pandit

Devananda Pandit was a scholar, an ascetic who was indifferent to the world from an early age. Being a mumukshu, or one who seeks impersonal liberation, Devananda Pandit praised dry austerities and renunciation, and did not glorify devotional service in his discourses on the Bhagavatam.

One day, Srivasa Pandit came to hear a Bhagavatam recital at Devananda Pandit's house. As he listened to the text of the Bhagavatam, Srivasa Pandit became absorbed in a mood of loving devotion and started to cry. Devananda Pandit's faithless disciples threw him out of the assembly for causing a disturbance. Since Devananda Pandit did not object to the action of his students, he was responsible for an offense to a devotee. For this reason, Mahaprabhu was angry with him.

The Lord says: "Whoever recites the Bhagavatam without glorifying devotional service is an ignorant fool who knows nothing. This rascal recites the Bhagavatam and never mentions bhakti. I will go and tear up his manuscript, just watch me. (Chaitanya Bhagavat 2.21.20-21)

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur comments on this verse as follows: "When those who are bereft of devotional service forget their actual identity, they become completely indifferent to such service. When they identify this indifference as the ultimate goal of life, they become a source of profound irritation to the Lord, even though he is by nature supremely merciful. Here He reveals that irritation and informs us that this attitude of the non-devotee is not only unnecessary but detestable. He also indicates that both the acts of enjoying and renouncing the fruits of material actions are improper."

It was through great good fortune that Mahaprabhu's dear associate, Vakresvara Pandit came to stay at Devananda Pandit's house. Because Devananda Pandit took excellent care of Vakresvara Pandit, Mahaprabhu softened towards him. Previously, Devananda Pandit had been completely without any faith in the Lord, but when he heard of Mahaprabhu's glories from the mouth of Vakresvara Pandit, his attitude changed. Through the association of the Lord's devotee, he began to develop a taste for pure devotional service.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur writes in this regard, "For Devananda Pandit of Kuliya, the fruit of service to the Vaishnava was faith in Mahaprabhu's lotus feet. Vakresvara Pandit's visit to his house was the source of auspiciousness. Although he was a Smarta, Devananda Pandit was a great scholar and self-controlled. He studied nothing but the Srimad Bhagavatam. He believed in God and had control of his senses, but was only lacking faith in Mahaprabhu. By the grace of Vakresvara Pandit, this faulty intelligence was wiped away and he became a believer in Lord Chaitanya."

Mahaprabhu told Devananda Pandit to explain the Bhagavatam in terms of devotional service. It was Devananda Pandit's great fortune that he was able to receive the mercy of the Lord in the form of a chastisement.

His disappearance day is celebrated on the Krishna Ekadasi of the month of Paush.

- Excerpted from "Sree Chaitanya and Associates" by His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj

Sree Virachandra Prabhu

sankarshanasya yo vyuhah
payobdhi-sayi-namakah

sa eva virachandro 'bhuc
caitanyabhinna-vigrahah

Kshirodakashyai Vishnu, the expansion of Sankarshan who sleeps on the ocean of milk, has become Viracandra, who is not different from Chaitanya Himself. (Gaura-ganoddesa-dipika 67)

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna, is the origin of unlimited expansions and incarnations. He is the avatari. His first expansion is the root Sankarshan or Balaram. This same Balaram appeared with Lord Chaitanya as Nityananda Prabhu. Balaram's expanison, Maha-Sankarshan has his abode in the Vaikuntha planets, and he in turn expands as the purushavataras in the work of creation of the universe, first as the KaranodakashayiVishnu, who lies in the causal ocean, then as Garbhodakashayi Vishnu, who lies in the ocean within the individual universes, and finally as the Kshirodakashayi Vishnu, who not only lies in the ocean of milk, but is the director of the individual universe and is present as the indweller of every living being within the universe.

Also known as Aniruddha, Kshirodakashayi Vishnu appeared in the course of Mahaprabhu Sri Chaitanya's pastimes as Virabhadra Prabhu, the son of Lord Nityananda and His energy, Vasudha Devi.

The best of all of Nityananda's branches is Virabhadra Goswami. The sub-branches which grew out of him are unlimited in number.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 1.11.56)

As with all Vishnu-tattvas, the three energies, Sri, Bhu (Bhakti), and Nila (Lila) Shakti, were all present in Virabhadra's life. Virabhadra's Shri Shakti was named Srimati, who appeared in the village of Jhamatpur in Hooghly district as the daughter of Yadunandan Acharya and Vidyunmala(Lakshmi).

Yadunandan's wife Lakshmi was extremely chaste and devoted to her husband. Two daughters were born to her, Srimati and Narayani, both of whom were startlingly beautiful. At Jahnava's behest, the fortunate Brahmin gave both of his daughters in marriage to Virabhadra.
(Bhakti-ratnäkara 13.251-3)

Though Virabhadra belongs to the category of Vishnu-tattva, it is his lila to behave like a devotee: The greatest branch coming out of the trunk named

Nityananda is Virabhadra Goswami, who also has innumerable branches and sub-branches. It is not possible to describe them all. Although he is the Lord of the creation, Virabhadra presented himself as a great devotee. Though transcendental to all Vedic injunctions, he strictly followed the Vedic religion. Though the power of God was operating within him, out of sight to the world, he showed no pride. He is the main pillar holding up the edifice of devotional service to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. It is by the glorious mercy of Sri Virabhadra Gosai that people all over the world now have the chance to chant the names of Chaitanya and Nityananda. I therefore take shelter of the lotus feet of Virabhadra Goswami for by his mercy all desires are fulfilled.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 1.11.8-12)

Sri Narahari Chakravarti Thakur has written the following about Virabhadra in his Bhakti-ratnakara:
Nityananda Prabhu had a single son, Virabhadra, who was an ocean of virtue and capable of purifying the world. There is no limit to his glories, so who can sufficiently glorify him? He is famed as the branch of the Nityananda Prabhu. The root of all joy, he is sometimes known as Virabhadra and sometimes as Virachandra. If anyone sees him even once he will give up everything and make his lotus feet his all-in-all.
(Bhakti-ratnäkara 9.413-4, 420-1)

Virabhadra took initiation from his aunt and stepmother, Jahnava Devi. In his Anubhashya, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur has written, “Virabhadra Goswami had three disciples who were later celebrated as his sons —Gopijanavallabha, Ramakrishna and Ramachandra. The youngest, Ramachandra, belonged to the Shandilya dynasty and had the surname Batavyala. He established his family at Khardaha, and its members are known as the Khardaha Goswamis. The eldest disciple, Gopijanavallabha, was a resident of a village known as Lata, near the Mankor railway station in the district of Burdwan. The second, Ramakrishna lived near Maldah, in a village named Gayeshpur.”

According to the thirteenth chapter of the Bhakti-ratnakara,Virabhadra took permission from his mother Vasudha to go to Vrindavan. Upon arriving there, he performed Vraja Dham parikrama with the blessings of Bhugarbha and Sri Jiva Goswamis.

The old Shyamasundar temple in Khardaha has a manuscript of the Bhagavatam

that is said to have been hand copied by Virabhadra Prabhu. Some hold that this was actually written by Nityananda Prabhu himself. Virabhadra personally brought a piece of stone from which deities were carved. These deities which are still worshiped in Khardaha, are named Shyamasundar, Radhavallabha, and Nandadulala.Virabhadra established the custom of celebrating the birth of Nityananda Prabhu at Khardaha. The current managers of the Khardaha temple have many other legends about the life of Virabhadra Goswami.

The date of Virabhadra's appearance is given as Kartik krishna navami. The Gaudiya Vaishnava Abhidhana, however, gives the date as Agrahayan sukla caturdasi.

Sree Vyasapuja

On the occasion of the Holy Advent Anniversary of Sreemat Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur, the pioneer of the present Krishna-Bhakti Movement throughout the world.

On the occasion of His advent anniversary, His Divine Grace 108 Sree Sreemat Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupad delivered an address (prati-abhibhashan) in response to the devotional prayers and floral tributes of His disciples. He said: "O my well-wisher friend redeemers! Before speaking anything at the inception, with devotional submission to preceptorial channel, I pay my prostrated obeisances to the Lotus Feet of my Revered Gurudeva, Who is the inconceivable simultaneous distinct and non-distinct manifestation of Vishnu and Vaishnavas.
My Sree Gurudeva is the manifestation of the pastimes of Vishnu-vigraha (Godhead-Embodiment of All-Existence, All-Knowledge and All-Bliss) as His Absolute-Counterpart-Servitor.
He is God's dearest Vishnu-vigraha, yet He is existing in the hearts of all living beings of the world in the form of a Vaishnava to rescue a fallen soul like me.

Gurudeva in Human Form, which is the best amongst all living beings, is my only object of worship.
The visible world is eager to serve Him, but a man like me, who is averse to God, is satisfied in thinking Gurudeva to be a perfect man. Human beings, as devotees of that perfect man, are all Vaishnavas.
Vaishnavas are manifestations of my Gurudeva in various forms. Positively they are my Guruvarga and instructors, negatively they are persons, who at the time of performing bhajan are very much eager to hear delirium from an abominable wretched person like me.
It seems to me that along with them, unitedly, I am capable of reciting what I have heard from Sree Gurudeva. I have got no audacity to teach the world, because the peculiar characteristics of Vishnu-Vaishnava-Tattva are incomprehensible. Although they are eternally distinct, they are at the same time non-distinct, which is inconceivable."

Sree Vyasapuja Ceremony, Sree Gaudiya Math,
Ultadanga, Calcutta, Maghi Krishna Panchami Tithi, Fiftieth Advent Anniversary
on 12th Falgun, 1330 Bengali era.

Vyasapluja is generally celebrated by all sects of Sree Sanatan Dharma in India on Ashari-Purnima tithi (full moon day of the month of Ashar month on the Bengali calendar) on the occasion of the Ap-pearance of Sree Krishna-Dvaipayan Vedavyas Muni. But it is also the injunction of the scriptures for a sannyasi to perform gurupuja especially on his Advent day.
In accordance to the scriptural injunction, Sreela Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupad performed worship of His Gurudeva especially on the day of His own appearance. In this way it is introduced in all groups of Saraswata Gaudiya Sampradaya throughout the world.
It is ordinarily understood that the ritualistic performance of offering floral tributes to the Lotus feet of Gurudeva is guru puja. Although this sort of ritualistic guru puja has got some efficacy, it is not all.
It will be actual gurupuja if the teachings of Gurudeva are accepted and practiced. We should note the salient points in the teachings of Sreela Saraswati Goswami Thakur in His Prati- Abhibhashan to His disciples:
1) Unconditional submission to Preceptorial channel
2) Gurudeva is the Absolute-Counterpart-Servitor of the Supreme Lord
3) A true Vaishnava and a true Gurudeva are identical
4) Servitors of true Vaishnavas and true Gurudeva are true Vaishnavas

5) Propagation of the Gospel of Divine Love of Lord Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu can be successfully performed through the association of the bona fide Vaishanavas.
In his final message, Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur also has given especial emphasis to preach the message of Sree Rupa Goswami unitedly in the association of true devotees and to have complete dedication to sankirtana-yajna.
6) Preachers should not have the vanity that they are competent to do prachar. Propagation of the message of Divine Love cannot be effectively done without humbleness.

--- HDG Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj
February 22nd, 2000, Calcutta, India.
The article was sent to Sri Jayapataka Swami Maharaj of ISKCON when he requested it for publishing in their Magazine specially introduced in that event.

Sreemad Bhagavatam begins with Sharanagati

To take complete shelter of Krishna is called Sharanagati. It is related in the Mahabharata, that when Duhshasana wanted to denude Draupadi in front of the kings and others such as Drona and Bhima, Draupadi cried out Krishna's name, calling Him to rescue her. Krishna did save her, but not immediately. Because He came to the rescue a little late, Draupadi complained to Him. She said, "Thank You very much for saving me, but You could surely have come a little earlier. Why did You wait so long? What is the reason You delayed?"

Krishna replied, " You called out My name, I admit. But those words were not enough. You did not take shelter of Me. At first you took shelter of Bhima and Arjuna thinking that they would come and kill Duhshasana and protect you. Why should I come if you think that Bhima and Arjuna can protect you? You uttered My name, but you did not take My shelter. You took shelter of Bhima

and Arjuna."

We cannot deceive Bhagwan . It is not possible. He is residing within us and sees everything.

Krishna: "Is it not true that you took shelter of Bhima and Arjuna?"

Draupadi: "Yes."

Krishna: "Then why should I have come?"

Draupadi: "Well, You should have come after that."

Krishna: "After that you took shelter of Drona, the teacher of the Kauravas and Pandavas. If Drona had intervened, no one would have had power to stop him. So why should I come if Drona could come and rescue you. Am I not correct?"

Draupadi: "Yes, You are correct."

Krishna: "After that you took shelter of grandfather Bhishma, the formidable warrior, and most respected member of all the court. If he had intervened, no one could have done anything You took shelter of him. Why should I come if Bhishma could rescue you? You did not take shelter of Me. Actually, you were crying, 'Krishna, Krishna,' but you had not taken shelter of me, but of those whom you could see before you. Why then should I have come? I thought, "Let them protect you."

"After that, you took shelter of Dhritrashtra, and after that, all the other kings. After all that you tried to rescue yourself by holding tightly onto your cloth- with one hand up you were trying to hold onto your cloth. But I do not appear where sharanagati is only partial. I do not descend under such circumstances. When, you raised both your hands and called to Me, taking absolute shelter of Me, then I came immediately."

Unless we take absolute shelter, we cannot have any kind of remedy of our miseries. As long as we do not submit to the Supreme Lord Krishna sincerely, completely, we shall have to suffer the distress of this world. We are trying to earn and maintain our worldly relations so that we might have happiness. Yet we can see the consequences of our attachment to non-eternal things severe

miseries. Even so, due to our ignorance, our misconception of self, we keep on trying for this ephemeral happiness. We have lost our money and we have lost our near and dear ones, but again we keep trying to get those things back again. If no human being is available, we acquire dog, a cat, a parrot or whatever, and become attached to that. Again and again we try for the non-eternal because the root cause of our affliction is not eliminated. This root cause is our misconception of self and the ignorance of thinking that by getting material benefits we will be truly benefited. As long as we do not surrender to the Lord, we will never be able to attain the ultimate goal of life.

The Kathopanishad (2.23) mentions:

nayam atma pravacanena labhyo
na medhaya na bahuna srutena
yam evaisa vrinute tea labhyas
tasyaisa atma vivrinute tanum svam

"God cannot be attained and realized by delivering lectures, by intellect, or by great erudition. The Supreme Lord will reveal His own eternal form only to a surrendered soul."

And at the end of Bhagwad Geeta (18.65-66) Krishna has given His highest instruction to all conditioned souls of the world for their eternal welfare:

man-mana bhava mad-bhakto
mad-yaji mam namaskuru
mam evaisyasi satyam te
pratijane priyo 'si me

"Devote your mind to Me. If it is difficult to devote your mind to Me, serve Me; engage your senses in My service. If this is also not possible, worship Me. If even that is not possible, take absolute shelter of me. I promise you that you will surely get Me."

sarva-dharman parityajya
mam ekam saranam vraja
aham tvam sarva-papebhyo
mokshayishyami ma shucah

"Relinquish all My previous spiritual instructions about dharma (the relative social- religious duties enjoined by the Vedas) and take absolute shelter of Me."

The Bhagwad Geeta ends with Sharanagati, and that is where the Sreemad Bhagwatam begins.

Without Sharanagati, we cannot enter into the spiritual realm. When one becomes a person who is of Krishna and does only things for the satisfaction of Krishna, then that is called bhakti. On 04 Feb 08.

Sri Abhirama Thakur (Sri Rama Das)

purasridama-namasid abhiramo'dhuna mahan |
dvatrimsata janair eva vahyam kastham uvaha sah ||

He who was previously known as Sridama is today Abhirama Thakur. He picked up a piece of wood that it took 32 men to lift. (Gaura ganoddesa dipika 126)

Abhirama Thakur lived with his wife Malini in the village of Khanakul Krishnanagara in the Hooghly district. Khana refers to the Dvarakesvara River, küla means banks; thus, the village of Krishnanagara on the banks of the Dvarakesvara River is also known as Khanakula Krishnanagara. At the doors of his temple stands a large Bakula tree which is known as the Siddha-bakula, and the place is popularly called Siddha-bakula Kunja. This is the place where Abhirama Thakur first sat down when he arrived in the village. The Gopinath deity was found when digging for a tank first began. This tank goes by the name of Sri Abhirama Kund. The temple also houses the deities of Vrajavallabha, Gopal and a Salagram Sila.

Sri Abhirama Thakur was a very vigorous and powerful acharya. He engaged in preaching on the orders of Lord Nityananda and saved many atheists and people

opposed to the Vaishnava religion.

Abhirama Goswami possessed a fiery temper and great spiritual power. The atheists trembled whenever they saw him. He was intoxicated as though he had been possessed by Nityananda, and his enchanting mercies are famed throughout the world. (Bhakti ratnakara 4.103-4)

Rama Das Abhirama was fully absorbed in the mood of friendship. He lifted a flute which contained sixteen knots. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 1.10.116)

This reference in the Chaitanya Charitamrita is also that found in the Gaura-ganoddesa-dipika which says that Abhirama Thakur lifted a log which would normally have taken 32 people to lift. The Bhakti ratnakara states that it would have taken hundreds of people. After lifting it, he held it like a flute.

He held in his hands a piece of wood that a hundred men could not move, in the way one holds a flute. (Bhakti ratnakara 4.123)

The devotees were greatly astonished when they saw him perform such superhuman feats. According to one legend, whenever Abhirama Thakur paid his obeisances to a stone or statue, if it was not a Vishnu-Sila or a consecrated deity, it would crack or be reduced to powder. Non-devotees were also unable to tolerate his pranamas. Nityananda’s son Virachandra Goswami and daughter Ganga Devi survived his obeisances, which confirmed their divinity. These things are written in astakas composed by Abhirama Thakur in their name.

Srila Abhirama Thakur possessed an amazing whip which he named Jaya-mangala. Anyone who was touched by this whip would immediately experience the transcendental ecstasies of prema. One day Srinivas Acharya visited Abhirama Thakur who gave him three lashes with that whip. Abhirama’s wife Malini stopped her husband from hitting him again, saying that Srinivas was just a young lad who wouldn’t be able to tolerate the effects of divine love. Nevertheless, Srinivas Acharya was very dear to Abhirama and received many blessings from him. Though not his initiated disciple, he was like a disciple to him. The Jaya-mangala whip is still held in the Krishnanagara temple.

In the Bhakti ratnakara, the following statement is also made:

O Srinivas! How much more can I say? Abhirama descended into this world in

order to deliver it. Taking birth in a Brahmin family, he became a scholar in all the scriptures and was an unequalled musician, not only in song and playing musical instruments, but in dance also. He married at Nityananda Balaram's request. His wife Malini is also indescribably powerful. (Bhakti ratnakara 4.105-8)

Many people say that the Bali Math in Puri was established by Abhirama Thakur. An annual festival is held in Khanakula Krishnanagara on his disappearance day, i.e., the Chaitra Krishna saptami.

Our parama-guru, Jagad-guru Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur visited this site when travelling on the parikrama of Sri Gaura Mandala. At that time, the devotees charged with the temple greeted him with great hospitality and honored him and his followers with special treatment.

Sri Baladeva Avatara

Sri Baladeva Prabhu, the original Narayana, is the vaibhava-prakasa of Govinda. He is the original cause of all emanations. The Propagating Prime Cause of individuality or the All-pervading Function-Holder of the Personal Godhead is also Baladeva - He is svayam-prakasa. Sri Baladeva's color is white, different from Krishna. He carries a buffalo horn, which produces more sound than the flute of Krishna. Therefore He is known as the Horn-holder (Singadhrka). Sri Baladeva possesses qualities like Krishna. He is the fountainhead or prime source of the all-embracing, all-pervading and all-extending energy. The actual meaning of these definitions cannot be understood completely using limited mundane terminology.

Sri Balarama, who is the deity of the sandhini potency, serves Krishna in His five Forms of Maha-Sankarsana, Karanodakasayi, Garbhodakasayi, Ksirodakasayi, and Sesa. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has written as follows in

the Amrta Pravaha Bhasya (commentary) of Sri Caitanya Caritamrta:

Balaram, Who is one of the First Four Expanded Forms of Krishna in Dwaraka, can be called the Original Sankarsana. He is Maha-Sankarsana in the second manifested expanded Four Forms of Narayana in Vaikuntha. He serves Krishna by taking the Form of Maha-Sankarsana amd Four other Amsamsa-Avataras Kala) Karanabdhisayi, Garbhodasayi, Ksirodakasayi and Sesa. He Himself, while assisting in the pastimes of Krishna, with the four Forms of Maha-Sankarsana, Karanodakasayi, Garbhodakasayi, and Ksirodakasayi, does also the work of creation. Sesa who is known as Ananta performs a variety of Krishna's service. In this way, Balarama tastes the divine nectar of the service of Krishna accepting all these Forms.

sei ta' 'ananta' 'sesa'—bhakta-avatara
isvarera seva vina nahi jane ara
sahasra-vadane kare Krishna-guna gana
niravadhi guna ga'na, anta nahi pa'na

sanakadi bhagavata sune yanra mukhe
bhagavanera guna kahe, bhase prema-sukhe

chatra, paduka, sayya, upadhana, vasana
arama, avasa, yajna-sütra, simhasana

eta murti-bheda kari' Krishna-seva kare
krsnera sesata païa 'sesa' nama dhare
(Caitanya Caritamrta, Adi-lila 5.120-124)

"That Ananta Sesa is the devotee Avatara of Godhead. He knows nothing but the service of Lord Krishna. With His thousands of mouths He sings the glories of Lord Krishna, but although He always sings in that way, He does not find an end to the qualities of the Lord. The four Kumaras (Sanak etc.) hear Srimad Bhagavatam from His lips, and they in turn repeat the glories of Lord to be immersed in the ocean of transcendental bliss of love of God. Ananta Sesa serves Lord Krishna by assuming the forms of the Lord's umbrella, slippers, bedding, pillow, garments, easy chair, residence, sacred thread and throne. He is thus called Lord Sesa, as He is the last manifested Form of Krishna to serve Him. He takes various forms for the service of Krishna."

While referring to Baladeva Vidyabhusana's explanation on the Laghu-Bhagavatamrta, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Prabhupada, in his commentary (Anubhasya) on the above texts, has written as follows:

The Sesa who is the adhara-sakti (supporter-power) of the bedstead of Visnu (Wielder of the Sarnga bow), is in the category of God (Visnu-tattva).The Sesa who is the bearer of the planets is of the category of Saktyavista jiva-tattva. The Sankarsana of the second catur-vyüha appears as Rama, taking with Him Sesa who bears the global spheres. There are two features of Sesa. One is the bearer of the globes, and the other is the bedstead servitor.

The Sesa who bears the globes is an avesa-Avatara (absorption-avatara) of Krishna (or Sankarsana), and therefore He is (also) known as Sankarsana. The bedstead feature of Sesa always considers Himself to be an eternal servitor and friend of the Lord Sarngadhara (wielder of the Sarnga bow).

Sri Krishna Himself performs His own service in His Form of Baladeva. Therefore Sri Baladeva is the original Spiritual Master. By the mercy of Baladeva, one obtains the service of Sri Krishna. Gurudeva is non-different from Baladeva and Nityananda. The only difference between Baladeva and Gurudeva is that Sri Baladeva is omnipotent visnu-tattva Who possesses opulences while Gurudeva is sakti-tattva. Tulasi can be offered to the Lotus Feet of Sri Baladeva, but since Gurudeva is sakti-tattva, Tulasi cannot be offered to his lotus feet.

In the 3rd volume of the Sayings of Srila Prabhupada, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Prabhupada expresses the following thoughts in relation to Sri Baladeva:

In the sruti (Mundaka Upanisad 3.2.4) it is said: "nayamatma balahinena labhyah" (Without the grace of Baladeva, nobody can get God). There will be no auspiciousness, eternal bliss without taking shelter of the lotus feet of Sri Gurudeva. Sri Baladeva serves Krishna with His body, mind and words. We will be benefitted only by His mercy. When we will argue with our Gurudeva, when we will try to rectify or correct Gurudeva with our mundane knowledge or imitate him only artificially, not actually following him, then we will be following the path of asrauta (not listening/hearing of authentic scriptures descending through bona fide preceptorial channel) or tarka (argument) instead of the path of srauta (following or listening of scriptures). When we will give up all such evil-minded tendencies and surrender unto his lotus feet, only then will

the following of the path of hearing bring auspiciousness to us.

The tenth canto of Srimad Bhagavatam describes the appearance pastime of Sri Baladeva.

Suffering from the burden of the demons, mother earth took shelter of Creator Brahma. Brahma and the demigods then went to the shore of the ocean of milk and prayed to Visnu. In a state of self-absorbed meditation, Brahma heard a divine voice from the sky which said that Visnu would soon appear to reduce the burden of the earth.

Brahma then told the demigods about the oracle and ordered them to take birth along with their wives in the dynasty of the Yadus and in the family of the Panòavas for the service of the Supreme Lord.

When Vasudeva married Devaki, Kamsa, out of affection for his sister, was driving their chariot. At that time, a heavenly voice said that Devaki’s eighth child would kill Kamsa. Just by hearing that heavenly voice, Kamsa got up and prepared to kill Devaki. Even after trying to convince him in many ways, Vasudeva was not able to stop Kamsa from carrying out his heinous act. He then took an oath before Kamsa that whenever they would have a child, Vasudeva would surrender it to Kamsa. "The saintly Vasudeva will surely keep his word." With this strong confidence, Kamsa desisted from the killing of his sister.

In due course of time, on the birth of the first child of Devaki, Vasudeva took his son and went to Kamsa. He handed over his first child to Kamsa as he had promised. At that time Kamsa returned Vasudeva’s first son to him, but he later heard from Narada about the true forms of the residents of Vraja and the Yadavas, about his own previous birth, and whether the eighth pregnancy would be counted from the beginning or the end. When Kamsa heard such a suspicious statement, he became thoughtful. He then shackled Vasudeva and Devaki in prison, and killed the six children of Devaki one after the other. He imprisoned his father Ugrasena and began to oppose the Yadavas. After being harassed by Jarasandha, Aghasura, Bakasura and other demons, the Yadavas fled to different states.

When Sri Baladeva appeared as the seventh pregnancy of Devaki, Yogamaya, as per the Supreme Lord’s instruction, attracted the seventh pregnancy of Devaki without anyone’s knowledge and placed Him in the womb of Rohini, Vasudeva’s

second wife in Gokula. Since He had been attracted from the womb of Devaki by Yogamaya and had been placed in the womb of Rohini, He is therefore known by the names of Rohini-nandana and Sankarsana. Because of giving pleasure to the residents of Gokula, He became famous as Rama, and he became known as Balabhadra due to possessing extraordinary strength.

The citizens of Mathura thought that Devaki's pregnancy had been destroyed and lamented. After the appearance of the Presiding Deity of the sandhini potency Baladeva Prabhu, Lord Krishna appeared on the eighth day of the dark fortnight of the month of Bhadra when it was conjoined with the Rohini naksatra. Baladeva's appearance day is the full moon day of the month of Bhadra. He appeared as the elder brother for the thorough service of Sri Krishna. In the pastimes of Rama, He appeared as the younger brother (Laksmana); therefore, He was not able to do the thorough service of Sri Ramacandra. That is why, in the pastimes of Krishna, He appeared as the elder brother. Nanda Maharaja and Yasoda Devi also entrusted only Balarama with the responsibility to look after the child Gopala. While Krishna wandered in the forest along with His friends, Balarama was always engaged in His service. After killing Aghasura, Krishna was taking lunch with the cowherd boys on the banks of a lake. At that time, Brahma, wanting to test Sri Krishna, took away His calves and cowherd boys and hid them in a cave within the Sumeru Mountain.

Sri Krishna immediately assumed the Forms of the calves and cowherd boys and came back home. Due to His returning in this way, neither the cowherds nor the cows were able to understand that their children had been kidnapped. But the cowherds became ecstatic with transcendental love when they touched their children. The cows on, touching their calves, began shedding tears due to intense love. Although the residents of Vraja were not able to understand the reason for this, Baladeva Prabhu understood that because Krishna had expanded Himself as the cowherd boys and calves, the residents of Vraja were exhibiting these symptoms of divine love of Godhead. During the Kaliya-damana pastime, the residents of Vraja, being greatly distressed in separation from Krishna, wanted to enter into the water polluted by the poison of Kaliya. But Baladeva Prabhu, who knows the glories of Sri Krishna, stopped them from this task and saved them from drowning in Kaliya's lake.

Sri Baladeva Prabhu performed the pastimes of killing Dhenukasura in Talavana and Pralambasura in Bhanòiravana. When Balarama and Sri Krishna reached the age of pauganòa (ages 5-10), Nanda Maharaja and other cowherds appointed

Them to take care of the cows alongwith the calves. One day, Balarama and Sri Krishna, along with Their friends, arrived in Talavana while wandering in different forests. The powerful Dhenukasura, in the form of an ass, along with his powerful cohorts, used to live there to guard the palmyra trees so that no living beings could eat the palmyra fruits. Many palmyra trees were full of fruits. By the smell of the fully-ripened palmyra fruits, Talavana and places nearby were giving off a nice aroma. Because of that, the cowherd boys requested Krishna and Balarama to get those fruits for them.

In order to fulfill their desire, Krishna and Balarama took all of Their friends and happily entered into Talavana. Out of affection for Sri Krishna, Baladeva first entered into the forest and like an intoxicated elephant, shook the palmyra trees. Because of this shaking, palmyra fruits began falling down making a loud sound. Angered by the sound of the falling palmyra fruits, the ass demon Dhenukasura immediately came there and struck the chest of Balarama with his hind legs and began jumping around making fearsome sounds. When Dhenukasura returned to kick Balarama, Baladeva caught hold of his two legs and wheeled him around with such speed that the demon left his body while he was still being wheeled. Baladeva then threw the demon to the top of a palmyra tree. The demon’s body was so big that palmyra tree began to break and by crashing against other palmyra trees, they all began to fall to the ground. When Dhenukasura's cohorts arrived there in anger, they also achieved the same fate. The pastime of killing Dhenukasura took place in Talavana after the pastime of subduing Kaliya.

In his purport about the pastime of the killing of Dhenukasura, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has written as follows: "All the demons killed by Sri Baladeva are all those anarthas (unwanted things) that will be removed by the devotional practitioner with their efforts. This is the secret of Vraja-bhajan. Dhenukasura is the carrying of the burden of superstition. Ignorance and nescience about one’s own real self, the Real Form of the Holy Name, and the Real Form of the object of worship is indicated as Dhenukasura.

In the 18th chapter of the tenth canto of Srimad Bhagavatam, the pastime of the killing of Pralambasura is described as follows. Sri Krishna and Balarama’s wandering place of Vraja-dhama was decorated with all the pleasing qualities of spring even during the summer season.

One day, Krishna and Balarama, along with Their friends, were engaged in playing, dancing and singing when Pralambasura entered their midst disguised

as a cowherd boy. The cowherd friends were not able to understand this, but the omniscient Lord Krishna understood that the newcomer cowherd was a demon in disguise. In order to kill him, He received him as a friend. All the cowherd boys then divided into two parties for a game. Krishna became the leader of one group and Balarama became the leader of the other. The condition of the game was that whoever was defeated would carry the victor on his shoulder. When they began playing, Sridama and Vrsabha of Balarama's party became victorious. Then Krishna carried Sridama and Bhadrasena carried Vrsabha. On the other side, Pralambasura had been defeated by Balarama. Avoiding Krishna, he ran away carrying Balarama stealthily on his shoulders.

uvaha krsno bhagavan
sridamanam parajitaù
vrsabham bhadrasenas tu
pralambo rohini-sutam
(Srimad Bhagavatam 10.18.24)

Balarama understood the ill motives of the demon and He became so heavy on the shoulders of Pralambasura that he was unable to bear Balarama's weight. The demon then assumed his real form. On seeing the terrible form of the demon, Haladhara Baladeva at first expressed the symptoms of doubt. But just as Indra had hurled the lightning bolt to shatter mountains for slaying the demons, Baladeva struck the demon a ferocious blow on the head with His fist. This blow shattered Pralambasura's head and he began to vomit blood. He left his body while repeatedly vomiting blood. The cowherd boys and demigods then began to glorify Lord Baladeva profusely on the excellence of His deed.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura describes the purport of the killing of Pralambasura as follows: Pralambasura is a symbol of illicit sexual connection (stri-lampatya), aspiration for gain, adoration (labha-püja) and name and fame (pratistha).

Śrī Baladeva-Avatāra

Śrī Baladeva Prabhu is the eighth avatāra of the Daśāvatāra. In his commentary on Śrī Caitanya-Caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, 20.245, Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda has written on the topic of twenty-five līlā-avatāras. Among them, Balarāma, the slayer of the demon Pralambā, is the twenty-second ḷīlā-avatāra.

People who practice other religious faiths often consider the followers of sanātana-dharma to be polytheists, mistakenly believing that they worship many gods. But the truth is, that this misunderstanding arises due to their inability to understand the purports of the esoteric principles of sanātana-dharma. The followers of sanātana-dharma have never claimed that there are many supreme lords. The Supreme Lord is infinite and complete. As such, He can never be two, three, four or a thousand. To consider something to be outside of the Infinite would imply the loss of the infinity of the Infinite and completeness of the Complete. Therefore the Complete and Infinite Power Almighty can be only one in number—'ekamevādvitīyam'.

The All-powerful Supreme Lord possesses infinite opulences. There may be many small gods dependent on the Supreme Lord, but the Supreme Lord Himself is never many—He is One. The wise should very carefully consider whether or not persons who have the capacity to observe the manifestations of the various opulences of the Supreme Lord (the spiritual energy, marginal energy, material energy and other energies), should be considered to be more advanced and competent than those who cannot. In a rudimentary sense, the whole earth is constituted of 'dirt' and one could say that this statement constitutes knowledge of some kind. However, those who are able to analyse and acutely observe this 'dirt' perceive definable characteristics and qualities and are therefore thought of as 'scientists'.

Similarly, 'spiritual scientists' can perceive the infinite opulences of the Supreme Lord. This type of perception is the king of all knowledge. It should not be misconstrued that such persons are polytheists or that they promote the concept of many simultaneous supreme beings. The Supreme Lord, although being One, can perform pastimes or spiritual activities in an infinite variety of Forms. If someone should say that He cannot do so, then it will be meaningless to call Him the 'Supreme Lord' or the 'All-Powerful One'. The Supreme Lord, although

being One, exhibits differences according to His pastimes. He is known as Viṣṇu, 'ya idaṁ viśvaṁ vyāpnoti iti viṣṇu'. Viṣṇu is the Complete Substance. Demigods and demigoddesses, being expansions of His energies, are His subordinates and are not Viṣṇu. There is no duality in Viṣṇu-tattva. However, there are differences in pastimes. The king in the court and the king in the harem are not two different kings. He can be seen at two places in two different manifestations. In his court, he displays his majestic nature and in his chambers he displays his intimate nature. Similarly, the Supreme Lord performs infinite pastimes in infinite Forms. He is Śrī Nārāyaṇa in His majestic aspect, Śrī Rāmacandra in His ethical aspect, Śrī Kṛṣṇa in His sweet amorous aspect, and Gaurasundara Śrī Hari in His most munificent aspect. The mood of repulsiveness (bībhatsa-rasa) has been manifested in Lord Matsya. Fearsomeness (bhayānaka-rasa) and parental affection (vātsalya-rasa) have been manifested in Lord Nṛsiṁha. Therefore, Matsya and other avatāras display differences in pastimes. All twelve rasas (five main and seven secondary mellows or moods) are manifested in their complete form only in Śrī Nandanandana Kṛṣṇa. So, even though all the manifestations of the Supreme Being are one, the excellence of rasa is only fully realised in the Original Form of Nandanandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

siddhānta tastvabhede 'pi

śrīśa kṛṣṇa svarūpayoḥ

rasenotkṛṣyate kṛṣṇa

rūpameṣā rasasthitiḥ

(Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 2.32)

"In principle, there is no difference between the Forms of Kṛṣṇa and Nārāyaṇa. Still, owing to the superior nature of śriṅgāra or mādhurya rasa (conjugal mellows), Śrī Kṛṣṇa's form exhibits excellence. Such is the orderly foundation of rasa."

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vedavyāsa Muni has mentioned twenty-two avatāras in the Third Chapter of the First Canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. There, he writes as follows:

ekonaviṁśe viṁśatime

vṛṣṇiṣu prāpya janmanī

rāma-kṛṣṇāv iti bhuvo

bhagavān aharad bharam

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 1.3.23)

"In the nineteenth and twentieth avatāras, the Lord removed the burden of the world by His advent in the two Forms of Rāma and Kṛṣṇa in the Yadu Dynasty."

In this context, after giving careful consideration to the innumerable avatāras, and ultimately, to serve as a proclamation of the exalted pre-eminence of Kṛṣṇa, it is stated as follows:

ete cāṁśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ

kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam

indrāri-vyākulaṁ lokaṁ

mṛḍayanti yuge yuge

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 1.3.28)

“All of the above-mentioned avatāras are either plenary portions1 (aṁśa) or portions of the plenary portions (kalā) of the Lord. All of Them appear millennium after millennium to protect the planets from disturbances created by the demons. But They are not equal to Kṛṣṇa as He is the Supreme Lord Himself.”

Here, the idea of portions and portions of the portions has been put forth due to the sequential manifestation of rasas. Nandanandana Kṛṣṇa manifests all rasas so therefore He is ‘svayaṁ bhagavān’ or the Primeval Lord, the source of all avatāras and aṁśa-avatāras.

yāṅra bhagavattā haite anyera bhagavattā

‘svayaṁ-bhagavān’-śabdera tāhātei sattā

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Ādi 2.88)

“Only the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the source of all other Divinities, is eligible to be designated ‘svayaṁ bhagavān’—the Original Supreme Lord.”

Here, Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmī has expressed the difference between anuvāda (subject) and vidheya (predicate). That which is known is called anuvāda and that which is unknown is called vidheya:

taiche iṅha avatāra saba haila jñāta

kāra avatāra?—ei vastu avijñāta

‘ete’-śabde avatārera āge anuvāda

‘puruṣera aṁśa’ pāche vidheya-saṁvāda

taiche kṛṣṇa avatāra-bhitare haila jñāta

tāṅhāra viśeṣa-jñāna sei avijñāta

ataeva ‘kṛṣṇa’-śabda āge anuvāda

‘svayaṁ-bhagavattā’ piche vidheya-saṁvāda

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Ādi 2.79-82)

“In the same way, all these avatāras were known, but whose avatāras They were was unknown. First the word ‘ete’ (‘these’) establishes the subject (the avatāras). Then ‘plenary portions of the puruṣa-avatāras’ follows as the predicate. In the same way, when Kṛṣṇa was first counted among the avatāras, specific knowledge about Him was still unknown. Therefore, first the word ‘kṛṣṇa’ appears as the subject, followed by the predicate, describing Him as the Original Personality of Godhead.”

Supreme Godhead (the Prime Cause of all causes) Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s first expansion, Śrī Baladeva—the original Saṅkarṣaṇa (Mūla-Saṅkarṣaṇa), has the form of a cowherd boy in Vraja and that of a kṣatriya in Puri (Dvārakāpuri). Saṅkarṣaṇa of the first catur-vyūha (quadruple expansion) in Dvārakā is an aṁśa-āvatāra of Mūla-Saṅkarṣaṇa (cowherd Baladeva). Saṅkarṣaṇa Who is in the second catur-vyūha of Nārāyaṇa in Vaikuṇṭha is Mahā-Saṅkarṣaṇa, an aṁśa-avatāra of Mūla-Saṅkarṣaṇa in the form of a kṣatriya belonging to the first catur-vyūha in

Dvārakā. Kāraṇodakaśāyī Mahā-Viṣṇu, the first puruṣa-avatāra is the aṁśa-avatāra of Mahā-Saṅkarṣaṇa and the Supersoul of Māyā-Prakṛti2. Kāraṇodakaśāyī Mahā-Viṣṇu's expansion as Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu—the second puruṣa-avatāra, Pradyumna, enters into all the universes.

Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu's expanded form is the third puruṣa-avatāra—Śrī Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu in the form of Aniruddha, Who is the indwelling Supersoul of the individual universes, as well as the individual living beings. It is Śrī Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu Who, upon being prayed to by the demigods, appears millennium after millennium to annihilate the miscreants, to deliver the pious and to re-establish the principles of religion. Śrī Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu's expanded Form (aṁśa-avatāra) is Śeṣa—Anantadeva. In his explanation of Nityānanda-tattva, Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī explains Śrī Baladeva-tattva in this way. Śrī Baladeva is non-different from Nityānanda-tattva:

saṅkarṣaṇaḥ kāraṇa-toya-śāyī

garbhoda-śāyī ca payobdhi-śāyī

śeṣaś ca yasyāṁśa-kalāḥ sa nityā-

nandākhya-rāmaḥ śaraṇaṁ mamāstu

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Adi 1.7 & 5.7)

"May Śrī Nityānanda Rāma be the object of my constant remembrance. Saṅkarṣaṇa, Śeṣa-Nāga, Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu and Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu are His plenary portions and the portions of His plenary portions."

In his explanation of Śrī Govinda-tattva, Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda identifies Śrī Baladeva as the vaibhava-rūpa (pastime form) of Lord Govinda. 'Gāḥ vindati iti govindaḥ'—the word 'go' has several

meanings including knowledge, senses, earth, cow and others. Śrī Govinda manifests in five forms:

1. svarūpa or svayaṁ-rūpa: the Original Form.
2. para-svarūpa: the Nārāyaṇa Form.
3. vaibhava-rūpa: the Pastime Form.
4. antaryāmī-rūpa: the Indwelling Supersoul.
5. arcā-rūpa: the Deity Form.

The svarūpa or svayaṁ-rūpa, Vrajendranandana Govinda is the Cause of all causes.

īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ

sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ

anādir ādir govindaḥ

sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam

(Brahma-saṁhitā 5.1)

The para-svarūpa or para-tattva-svarūpa is understood as Śrī Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of the paravyoma (the transcendental spiritual sky) and Vaikuṇṭha.

Śrī Baladeva Prabhu, the original Nārāyaṇa, is the vaibhava-prakāśa of Govinda. He is the Original Cause of all-Emanations. The Propagating Prime Cause of Individuality or the All-pervading Function-Holder of the Personal

Godhead is also Baladeva—He is svayaṁ-prakāśa. Śrī Baladeva's color is white, different from that of Kṛṣṇa. He carries a buffalo horn, which produces more sound than the flute of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore He is known as the Horn-holder (Śiṅgādhṛk). Śrī Baladeva possesses qualities like Kṛṣṇa. He is the Fountainhead or Prime Source of the All-Embracing, All-Pervading and All-Extending energy. The actual meaning of these definitions cannot be understood completely by using limited mundane terminology. Vibhu and Prabhu are interdependent. The one Who is manifested as vaibhava-prakāśa is Vibhu (the opulent manifested Form) and the Divinity from Whom He is manifested is Prabhu. There is inconceivable non-distinction and distinction between Vibhu and Prabhu. Prabhu is Vāsudeva and Vibhu is Saṅkarṣaṇa. Vibhu and Prabhu's one aspect—the third manifestation, is Pradyumna. Similarly, Their fourth manifestation is in the Form of Aniruddha. These four constitute the original catur-vyūha in Dvārakā and are the origin of all other catur-vyūhas. Their second manifestation is the second catur-vyūha in the paravyoma or Vaikuṇṭha. They are also pure and turīya (transcendental) like the original catur-vyūha. Baladeva, who is Śrī Kṛṣṇa's vilāsa Form, is the Original Saṅkarṣaṇa. In the paravyoma or spiritual sky, Mahā-Saṅkarṣaṇa is the svarūpa-aṁśa—Balarāma's own aṁśa-avatāra. He is the source of the first puruṣa-avatāra, Kāraṇārṇavaśāyī Mahā-Viṣṇu. He (Baladeva or His manifestation Kāraṇārṇavaśāyī Mahā-Viṣṇu) is the cause of Rāma, Nṛsiṁha and other avatāras, as well as Goloka and Vaikuṇṭha, and He is also the cause of the cosmos. All of the above-mentioned five Forms of Viṣṇu are of the same nature. Any number of lamps can be lit from the original lamp, and they will all be capable of burning all things. Similarly, the original lamp is svayaṁ-rūpa Śrī Kṛṣṇa and there is no difference in tattva (essence) ontologically between the second, third, fourth and fifth Viṣṇu Deity, or between one Form and another of Viṣṇu. There is only difference in the characteristics of pastimes. (The explanation of 'Śrī Govinda'—The compilation of lectures of Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda: 2nd Vol.)

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, while introducing the avatāras of avatārī (the Fountainhead of avatāras) Śrī Kṛṣṇa, writes in the Twentieth Chapter of the Madhya-līlā of Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta as follows: Śrī Kṛṣṇa's three different forms are:

1. svayaṁ-rūpa: the Original Form.

2. tadekātma-rupa: the same Form, non-different from svayaṁ-rūpa but with different bodily features and specific activities.

3. āveśa-rupa: an empowered Form.

Again, svayaṁ-rupa is of two types:

1. svayaṁ-rupa

2. svayaṁ-prakāśa

‘svayaṁrupe—eka kṛṣṇa vraje gopamūrti’

Again, svayaṁ-prakāśa is of two types:

1. prabhāva

2. vaibhava

sei vapu, sei ākṛti pṛthak yadi bhāse

bhāvāveśa-bhede nāma ‘vaibhava-prakāśe’

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Madhya 20.171)

“If one Form or feature is differently manifested according to a different mode of features, it is called ‘vaibhava-prakāśa’ ”

vaibhava-prakāśa kṛṣṇera—śrī-balarāma

varṇa-mātra-bheda, saba—kṛṣṇera samāna

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Madhya 20.174)

"The first manifestation of the vaibhava feature of Kṛṣṇa is Śrī Balarāma. Śrī Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa have different complexions, otherwise Śrī Balarāma is equal to Kṛṣṇa in all respects."

In the Fifth Chapter of the Adi-līlā of Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Nityānanda-tattva is explained as follows:

sarva-avatārī kṛṣṇa svayaṁ bhagavān

tāṅhāra dvitīya deha śrī-balarāma

eka-i svarūpa doṅhe, bhinna-mātra kāya

ādya kāya-vyūha, kṛṣṇa-līlāra sahāya

sei kṛṣṇa—navadvīpe śrī-caitanya-candra

sei balarāma—saṅge śrī-nityānanda

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Adi 5.4-6)

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is the Fountainhead of all avatāras. Lord Balarāma is His second Form. These two are one and the same identity. They differ only in form. Lord Balarāma is the first expansion of Kṛṣṇa, and He assists in Lord Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental pastimes. That original Lord Kṛṣṇa appears in Navadvīpa as Lord Caitanya, and Balarāma appears with Him as Lord Nityānanda.

śrī-balarāma gosāñi mūla-saṅkarṣaṇa

pañca-rūpa dhari’ karena kṛṣṇera sevana

āpane karena kṛṣṇa-līlāra sahāya

sṛṣṭi-līlā-kārya kare dhari’ cāri kāya

sṛṣṭy-ādika sevā, tāṅra ājñāra pālana

‘śeṣa’-rūpe kare kṛṣṇera vividha sevana

sarva-rūpe āsvādaye kṛṣṇa-sevānanda

sei balarāma—gaura-saṅge nityānanda

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Ādi 5.8-11)

“Lord Balarāma is the original Saṅkarṣaṇa. He assumes five other Forms to serve Lord Kṛṣṇa. He Himself helps in the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and He does the work of creation in four other Forms. He executes the orders of Lord Kṛṣṇa in the work of creation, and in the Form of Lord Śeṣa, He serves Kṛṣṇa in various ways. In all the Forms He tastes the transcendental bliss of serving

Kṛṣṇa. That same Balarāma is Lord Nityānanda, the companion of Lord Gaurasundara.”

Śrī Balarāma, Who is the Deity of the sandhinī potency, serves Kṛṣṇa in His five Forms of Mahā-Saṅkarṣaṇa, Kāraṇodakaśāyī, Garbhodakaśāyī, Kṣīrodakaśāyī, and Śeṣa. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written as follows in the Amṛta Pravāha Bhāṣya (commentary) of Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta:

Balarāma, Who is one of the first four expanded Forms of Kṛṣṇa in Dvarakā, can be called the Original Saṅkarṣaṇa. He is Mahā-Saṅkarṣaṇa in the second manifested rxpanded four Forms of Nārāyaṇa in Vaikuṇṭha. He serves Kṛṣṇa by taking the Form of Mahā-Saṅkarṣaṇa and four other aṁśāṁśa-avatāras—Kāraṇābdhiśāyī, Garbhodaśāyī, Kṣīrodakaśāyī and Śeṣa. He Himself, while assisting in the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa with the four Forms of Mahā-Saṅkarṣaṇa, Kāraṇodakaśāyī, Garbhodakaśāyī, and Kṣīrodakaśāyī, also performs the work of creation. Śeṣa Who is also known as Ananta, performs various types of service to Kṛṣṇa. In this way, Balarāma tastes the divine nectar of the service of Kṛṣṇa by accepting all these Forms.

sei ta’ ‘ananta’ ‘śeṣa’—bhakta-avatara

īśvarera sevā vinā nāhi jāne āra

sahasra-vadane kare kṛṣṇa-guṇa gāna

niravadhi guṇa gā’na, anta nāhi pā’na

sanakādi bhāgavata śune yāṅra mukhe

bhagavānera guṇa kahe, bhāse prema-sukhe

chatra, pādukā, śayyā, upādhāna, vasana

ārama, āvāsa, yajña-sūtra, siṁhāsana

eta mūrti-bheda kari' kṛṣṇa-sevā kare

kṛṣṇera śeṣatā pāñā 'śeṣa' nāma dhare

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Ādi 5.120-124)

"That Ananta-Śeṣa is the devotee avatāra of Godhead. He knows nothing but the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa. With His thousands of mouths He sings the glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa, but although He always sings in this way, He does not find an end to the qualities of the Lord. The four Kumāras (Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana and Sanat) hear Śrīmad Bhāgavatam from His lips, and they in turn repeat the glories of the Lord, to be immersed in the ocean of transcendental bliss of love of God. Ananta-Śeṣa serves Lord Kṛṣṇa by assuming the Forms of the Lord's umbrella, slippers, bedding, pillow, garments, easy chair, residence, sacred thread and throne. He is thus called Lord Śeṣa, as He is the last manifested Form of Kṛṣṇa to serve Him. He takes various Forms for the service of Kṛṣṇa."

While referring to Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's explanation of Laghu-Bhāgavatāmṛta, Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda (in his 'Anubhāṣya' commentary) has written as follows:

The Śeṣa Who is the ādhāra-śakti (supporter-potency) of the bedstead of Viṣṇu (Wielder of the Śārṅga bow), is in the category of God (Viṣṇu-tattva). The Śeṣa Who is the bearer of the planets, is of the category of śaktyāviśta jīva-tattva. The Saṅkarṣaṇa of the second catur-vyūha appears as Rāma, taking with Him Śeṣa Who bears the global spheres. There are two features of Śeṣa—One is He Who supports the planetary systems on His hoods, and the other He Who is the

bedstead servitor.

The Śeṣa Who supports the planetary systems is an āveśa-avatāra (absorption-avatāra) of Kṛṣṇa (or Saṅkarṣaṇa), and is therefore also known as Saṅkarṣaṇa. The bedstead feature of Śeṣa always considers Himself to be an eternal servitor and friend of Lord Śārṅgadhara (Wielder of the Śārṅga bow).

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself performs His own service in His Form of Baladeva. Therefore Śrī Baladeva is the Original Spiritual Master. By the mercy of Baladeva, one obtains the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Gurudeva is non-different from Baladeva and Nityānanda. The only difference between Gurudeva and Baladeva is that Gurudeva is śakti-tattva while Śrī Baladeva is omnipotent Viṣṇu-tattva, the possessor of all opulences. Tulasi can be offered to the Lotus Feet of Śrī Baladeva, but since Gurudeva is śakti-tattva, Tulasi cannot be offered to his lotus feet.

In the third volume of 'The Sayings of Śrīla Prabhupāda', Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda expresses the following thoughts in relation to Śrī Baladeva:

"In the śruti (Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 3.2.4) it is said: 'nāyamātmā balahīnena labhyaḥ'—'Without the grace of Baladeva, no one can get God'. There can be no auspiciousness or eternal bliss without taking shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Gurudeva. Śrī Baladeva serves Kṛṣṇa with His body, mind and words. We can be benefited only by His mercy. When we argue with our gurudeva, when we try to rectify or correct gurudeva with our mundane knowledge or try to imitate him artificially without actually following him, then we are following the path of aśrauta (not listening to or hearing the authentic scriptures descending through the bona-fide preceptorial channel) or tarka (argument) instead of the path of śrauta (the following of or listening to scriptures). Only when we give up all such evil-minded tendencies and surrender unto his lotus feet, will following the path of hearing bring auspiciousness to us."

The Tenth Canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam describes the appearance pastime of Śrī Baladeva:

Suffering from the burden of the demons, Mother Earth took shelter of the creator demigod, Brahma. Brahma and the demigods then went to the shore of

the Ocean of Milk and prayed to Viṣṇu. In a state of self-absorbed meditation, Brahma heard a divine voice from the sky, which said that Viṣṇu would soon appear to reduce the burden of the earth.

Brahma then informed the demigods of the oracle and ordered them to take birth along with their wives, in the dynasty of the Yadus and the family of the Paṇḍavas, for the service of the Supreme Lord.

When Vasudeva married Devakī, Kaṁsa, out of affection for his sister, was driving their chariot. At that time, a heavenly voice rang out saying that Devakī's eighth child would kill Kaṁsa. Upon hearing that heavenly voice, Kaṁsa jumped up immediately and prepared to kill Devakī. Even after trying to convince him in many ways, Vasudeva was unable to stop Kaṁsa from carrying out this heinous act. Vasudeva then took an oath before Kaṁsa that, whenever he and his wife would have a child, he would surrender it to Kaṁsa. Kaṁsa thought that the saintly Vasudeva would surely keep his word and therefore, with firm confidence, Kaṁsa desisted from the killing of his sister.

In due course of time, on the birth of the first child of Devakī, Vasudeva took his son and went to Kaṁsa. He handed over his first child to Kaṁsa as he had promised. At that time Kaṁsa returned Vasudeva's first son to him, but later heard from Nārada about the true forms of the residents of Vraja and the Yādavas, about his own previous birth, and whether the eighth pregnancy would be counted from the beginning or the end. When Kaṁsa heard such a suspicious statement, he became thoughtful. He then shackled Vasudeva and Devakī in prison and killed the six children of Devakī one after the other. He also imprisoned his father, Ugrasena and began to oppose the Yādavas. After being harassed by Jarāsandha, Aghāsura, Bakāsura and other demons, the Yādavas fled to different states.

When Śrī Baladeva appeared as the seventh pregnancy of Devakī, Yogamāyā, as per the Supreme Lord's instruction, attracted the seventh pregnancy of Devakī without anyone's knowledge and placed Him in the womb of Rohiṇī, Vasudeva's second wife in Gokula. Since He was attracted from the womb of Devakī by Yogamāyā, and placed in the womb of Rohiṇī, He is therefore known by the names of Rohiṇī-nandana and Saṅkarṣaṇa. Because of giving pleasure to the residents of Gokula, He became famous as Rāma, and also became known as Balabhadra due to possessing extraordinary strength.

The citizens of Mathurā lamented, thinking that Devakī's pregnancy had been destroyed. Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared on the eighth day of the dark fortnight of the month of Bhādra (conjoined with the Rohiṇī nakṣatra) after the appearance of the Presiding Deity of the sandhinī potency, Baladeva Prabhu. Baladeva's appearance day is the full moon day of the month of Bhādra. He appeared as the elder brother for the comprehensive service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In the pastimes of Rāma, He appeared as the younger brother, Lakṣmaṇa, and was therefore unable to perform the thorough service of Śrī Rāmacandra. This is why, in the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, He appeared as the elder brother. Nanda Mahārāja and Yaśodā Devī also entrusted only Balarāma with the responsibility of looking after the child, Gopāla. While Kṛṣṇa wandered in the forest along with His friends, Balarāma was always engaged in His service. After killing Aghāsura, Kṛṣṇa was taking lunch with the cowherd boys on the banks of a lake. At that time, Brahma, wanting to test Śrī Kṛṣṇa, took away His calves and cowherd boys and hid them in a cave within Sumeru Mountain.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa immediately assumed the Forms of the calves and cowherd boys and returned home. Due to returning in this way, neither the cowherds nor the cows were able to understand that their children had been kidnapped, but the cowherds became ecstatic with transcendental love when they touched their children. The cows, upon touching their calves, began shedding tears due to intense love. Although the residents of Vraja were unable to understand the reason for this, Baladeva Prabhu understood that, because Kṛṣṇa had expanded Himself as the cowherd boys and calves, the residents of Vraja were exhibiting symptoms of divine love of Godhead. During the Kāliya-damana pastime, the residents of Vraja, being greatly distressed in separation from Kṛṣṇa, wanted to enter into the water polluted by the poison of Kāliya. But Baladeva Prabhu, Who knows the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, stopped them from this endeavor and saved them from drowning in Kāliya's lake.

Śrī Baladeva Prabhu performed the pastimes of killing Dhenukāsura in Tālavana and Pralambāsura in Bhāṇḍīravana. When Balarāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa reached the age of paugaṇḍa (ages 5-10), Nanda Mahārāja and other cowherds appointed Them to take care of the cows along with the calves. One day, Balarāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, along with Their friends, arrived in Tālavana while wandering through different forests. The powerful Dhenukāsura, in the form of an ass, along with his powerful cohorts, lived there to guard the palmyra trees so that no living

beings could eat the palmyra fruits. Many palmyra trees were full of fruits. Due to the scent of the fully ripened palmyra fruits, Tālavana and other places nearby emanated a beautiful aroma. Consequently, the cowherd boys requested Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma to get those fruits for them.

In order to fulfil their desire, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma took all Their friends and happily entered into Tālavana. Out of affection for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Baladeva first entered into the forest and, like an intoxicated elephant, shook the palmyra trees. Because of this shaking, palmyra fruits began falling down making a loud sound. Angered by the sound of the falling palmyra fruits, the ass demon Dhenukāsura immediately came there and struck the chest of Balarāma with his hind legs and began jumping around making fearsome sounds. When Dhenukāsura returned to kick Balarāma, Baladeva caught hold of his two legs and wheeled him around with such speed that the demon left his body while he was still being wheeled. Baladeva then threw the demon to the top of a palmyra tree. The demon's body was so big that the palmyra tree began to break and, crashing against the other palmyra trees, they all began to fall to the ground. When Dhenukāsura's cohorts arrived there in anger, they also achieved the same fate. The pastime of killing Dhenukāsura took place in Tālavana after the pastime of subduing Kāliya.

In his purport on the pastime of the killing of Dhenukāsura, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written as follows: "All the demons killed by Śrī Baladeva are all the anarthas (unwanted things) that will be removed by the devotional practitioner with the help of Śrī Baladeva. This is the secret of Vraja-bhajana. Dhenukāsura is the carrying of the burden of superstition. Ignorance and nescience about one's own real self, the Real Form of the Holy Name, and the Real Form of the Object of Worship is indicated by Dhenukāsura."

In the Eighteenth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, the pastime of the killing of Pralambāsura is described as follows:

Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma's wandering place of Vraja-dhāma was decorated with all the pleasing qualities of spring even during the summer season. One day, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, along with Their friends, were engaged in playing, dancing and singing when Pralambāsura entered their midst disguised as a cowherd boy.

The cowherd friends were unable to understand this, but omniscient Lord Kṛṣṇa understood that the newcomer cowherd was a demon in disguise. In order to kill him, He received him as a friend. All the cowherd boys then divided into two parties for a game. Kṛṣṇa became the leader of one group and Balarāma became the leader of the other. The condition of the game was that the party that was defeated would carry the victor on his shoulder. When they played, Śrīdāma and Vṛṣabha of Balarāma's party became victorious. Consequently, Kṛṣṇa carried Śrīdāma and Bhadrasena carried Vṛṣabha. On the other side, Pralambāsura had been defeated by Balarāma. Avoiding Kṛṣṇa, he ran away carrying Balarāma stealthily on his shoulders.

uvāha kṛṣṇo bhagavān

śrīdāmānaṁ parājitaḥ

vṛṣabhaṁ bhadrasenas tu

pralambo rohiṇī-sutam

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.18.24)

Balarāma, understanding the ill motives of the demon, became so heavy on the shoulders of Pralambāsura that he was unable to bear His weight. The demon then assumed his real form. On seeing the terrible form of the demon, Haladhara Baladeva at first expressed symptoms of doubt. But just as Indra hurled the lightning bolt, shattering mountains to slay the demons, Baladeva struck the demon a ferocious blow on the head with His fist. This blow shattered Pralambāsura's head and he began to vomit blood. He left his body in this state of repeatedly vomiting blood. The cowherd boys and demigods then began to glorify Lord Baladeva profusely due to the excellence of His deed.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura describes the purport of the killing of Pralambāsura as follows: "Pralambasura is a symbol of illicit sexual connection (strī-lāmpaṭya), aspiration for gain, adoration (lābha-pūjā) and name and fame (pratiṣṭhā)."

All Viṣṇu-tattva are accompanied by three potencies: śrī, bhū and līlā (līlā or dhāma as the potency of Durgā). Viṣṇu is incomplete without the manifestation of these three potencies. Śrī Gaura-Nārāyaṇa also possesses three potencies: Śrī Lakṣmīpriyā as śrī potency, Śrī Viṣṇupriyā as bhū potency and Śrī Navadvīpa dhāma as līlā or nīlā potency. Śrī Baladeva also possesses three potencies, Revatī, Vāruṇī and līlā or nīlā.

tomāra kṛpāya sṛṣṭi kare āja deve

tomāre se revatī vāruṇī kānti seve

(Another reading says: tomāre se revatī vāruṇī sadā seve)

(Caitanya Bhāgavata, Madhya-līlā 15.38)

In Śrī Caitanya Bhāgavata, Śrī Baladeva's potencies have been mentioned as Revatī, Vāruṇī and Kānti.

From the description in the Third Chapter of the Ninth Canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, it is known that Śaryāti, the son of Manu, had three sons named Uttānabarhi, Ānarta and Bhūriṣeṇa. Revata, the son of Ānarta, had one hundred sons, of whom the eldest was Kakudmi. On the advice of Brahma, Kakudmi offered his daughter Revatī to the mighty and powerful Baladeva, who is the original Viṣṇu-tattva. After offering his daughter, Kakudmi went to Badarikāśrama to perform austerities.

śrī vasu jāhnavā śrī nityānandera preyasī

śrī vāruṇī-revatī sakala guṇa rāśī

(Bhakti-Ratnākara 12.3999) Is this verse number correct?

śrī vāruṇī revatyovaṁśe-sambhave

tasya priye dve vasudhā ca jāhnavā

śrī sūryadāsāsya-mahātmanaḥ sūte

kakudmirūpasya ca sūryatejasaḥ

(Gaura-Gaṇoddesa-Dīpikā)

Those who were previously consorts of Baladeva—Vāruṇī and Revatī (born in the lineage of Revata) appeared as consorts of Nityananda—Vasudhā and Jāhnava, who were daughters of Suryadāsa, possessed of splendor like sun. Suryadāsa was the avatāra of Kakudmi. Although Śrī Baladeva is Viṣṇu-tattva, He Himself serves the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa as His foremost servant. He also engages others in the service of Kṛṣṇa and exhibits the pastime of acting as the Original Spiritual Master. In spite of all this, during His manifest pastimes in this material world, He Himself performed the pastime of accepting a guru in order to teach the importance of taking shelter of a guru. This is described in the Forty-fifth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam.

prabhavau sarva-vidyānāṁ

sarva-jñau jagad-īśvarau

nānya-siddhāmalaṁ jñānaṁ

gūhamānau narehitaiḥ

atho guru-kule vāsam

icchantāv upajagmatuḥ

kāśyaṁ sāndīpaniṁ nāma

hy avanti-pura-vāsinam

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.45.30-31)

"Concealing Their innately (self-effulgent) perfect knowledge by Their humanlike activities, the two omniscient Lords of the universe, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, Themselves the origin of all branches of knowledge, desired to reside at the school of a spiritual master and therefore approached Sāndīpani Muni, a native of Kāśī living in the city of Avantī."

Sāndīpani Muni, being satisfied with the service of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, taught Them the entire Vedas, political science and the sixty-four varieties of fine arts in sixty-four days.

When Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma expressed the desire to offer guru-dakṣiṇā (a fee or gift given to a priest) to Their spiritual master, the muni asked for the return of his son who had died in the ocean at Prabhāsa Tīrtha. To fulfil the desire of Their spiritual master, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma went to Prabhāsa Tīrtha and were informed about the abduction of the child by the powerful demon Pañcajana. On hearing this, Lord Kṛṣṇa entered the water and killed the demon but could not find the boy within the demon's belly. Lord Kṛṣṇa took the conchshell that had grown around the demon's body. That conch became famous as Pāñcajanya. Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma then reached Yamaloka and loudly blew the conchshell Pāñcajanya. On hearing the sound of the conchshell, Yamarāja arrived there and elaborately worshipped Them. Thereafter, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma brought the son of Their spiritual master from Yamarāja and gave the child to him as guru-dakṣiṇā. Sāndīpani Muni expressed great joy to have disciples like Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, and gave Them permission to return home.

śrī gurur-uvāca

samyak sampādito vatsa

bhavadbhyāṁ guru-niṣkrayaḥ

ko nu yuṣmad-vidha-guroḥ

kāmānām avaśiṣyate

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.45.47)

"The spiritual master, Sāndīpani Muni, said, 'My dear boys, You two have completely fulfilled the disciple's obligation of offering guru-dakṣiṇā. Indeed, for one who has disciples like You, what further desires could remain unfulfilled?' "

Śrī Balarāma was the teacher of Bhīma and Duryodhana in the art of fighting with clubs. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who is the performer of wonderful tasks, took away Rukmiṇī, the daughter of the Vidharbha king, Bhīṣmaka, in order to fulfil her desire. Jarāsandha and two other warriors fought with Kṛṣṇa but were defeated. Rukmiṇī's brother, Rukmī, who was jealous of Kṛṣṇa, was unable to tolerate this. He again attacked Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Due to Rukmiṇī's prayers, when Kṛṣṇa was about to kill Rukmī by destroying all his weapons, He let him go, but only after defacing him. At that time, Baladeva came there and pacified Rukmiṇī not to lament unnecessarily out of ignorance.

Although Rukmī was filled with animosity towards Śrī Kṛṣṇa and considered marriage relations with the enemy to be against dharma, he married his granddaughter, Rocanā to Aniruddha, the grandson of Rukmiṇī, desiring to please his sister out of extreme affection for her.

Rukmiṇī, Baladeva, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Sāmba, Pradyumna and other Yādavas were present at Aniruddha's wedding in the city of Bhojakaṭa. After the wedding, on the advice of the arrogant kings headed by the King of Kaliṅga, Rukmī began a

gambling match with Baladeva. In the first match, Rukmī defeated Baladeva, whereupon the King of Kaliṅga laughed at the Lord, displaying all his teeth. Later, upon the repeated victory of Baladeva, Rukmī began to say that He was winning by cheating and lying. Apart from this, Rukmī repeatedly ridiculed Baladeva by saying that He was only expert at tending cows. For some time, Baladeva remained silent, but on being insinuated repeatedly, Lord Baladeva struck Rukmī with His parigha (a kind of iron cudgel used in war in ancient times) to destroy his pride. Rukmi died then and there, and the other offensive kings fled to save their lives.

All living entities are created from the spark observation (reword if possible as the meaning will be unclear to a new reader) of Kāraṇodakaśāyī Mahā-Viṣṇu, who is an aṁśa-avatāra of Śrī Baladeva Prabhu. In this way, Baladeva has a direct relationship with all living entities. Because of His natural compassion for the living beings, He is affectionate toward them and also controls them for their benefit. Therefore He carries the plough, pestle and other weapons. In the Sixty-fifth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, there is a description of Śrī Balarāma's visit to Gokula, His consolation of the gopis by imparting news of the well being of Kṛṣṇa, His sport with the gopīs in the groves by the bank of the Yamunā and His pastime of attracting Yamunā. Sages who became enchanted upon seeing His beauty witnessed this. In this enchanted state, they recited Balarāma's glories and, while singing, played kettledrums in the heavens and showered down flower petals. One day during that time, Lord Balarāma drank some intoxicating divine vāruṇī juice that had been sent by the demigod Varuṇa and, in an intoxicated state, He began wandering about the forest. While wandering in the forest, He summoned the Yamunā River so that He could play in her waters but she refused to come, thinking that He was intoxicated. Because of her disobedience, Balarāma, in order to punish the Yamunā, began to pull her with the end of His plough in order to split her into hundreds of streams. Frightened and trembling, the goddess Yamunā then fell down at Lord Balarāma's Feet, chanting and repeatedly praying for forgiveness. Thereupon, Lord Balarāma forgave her. Later for the pleasure of the gopīs, the Lord bathed for a long time in the waters of the Yamunā with them and sported there. At the end of the water-sports, when Baladeva came out of the Yamunā, Goddess Kānti, a special form of Goddess Lakṣmī, presented Him with a pair of blue garments, precious ornaments, and a beautiful necklace. Lord Balarāma, dressed in the blue garments and wearing the golden necklace, appeared

resplendent.

kāmaṁ vihṛtya salilād

uttīrṇāyāsītāmbare

bhūṣaṇāni mahārhāṇi

dadau kāntiḥ śubhāṁ srajam

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.65.31)

Bearing the mark of the strike of the plough, the Yamunā still exhibits the prowess of Baladeva.

Śrīla Jayadeva Gosvāmī in his composition, Daśāvatāra-stotra, prays to the Lord of the universe in His Form as Haladhara (Wielder of the plough) in this way:

vahasi vapuṣi viśade vasanaṁ jaladābhaṁ

hala-hati-bhīti-milita-yamunābham

keśava dhṛta-haladhara-rūpa jaya jagadīśa hare

(Śrī Jayadeva's Daśāvatāra-stotra, 8th Verse)

"O Keśava! You assumed the Form of Haladhara, Wielder of the plough! You wear blue garments, which are colored like the water of the River Yamunā who feels great fear due to the striking of Your plough. O Lord of the universe! O Lord Hari in the Form of Haladhara, All glories unto You!"

The Hastināpura pastime of Baladeva has been described in the Sixty-eighth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. Sāmba, the son of Kṛṣṇa's queen Jāmbavatī, had taken away Duryodhana's daughter Lakṣmaṇā from her svayamvara assembly. The Kauravas were enraged by this improper act and began to fight with Sāmba in order to arrest him. While they were fighting, the Kauravas observed and appreciated the wonderful heroic form of the boy. But, four warriors of the Kaurava party collectively surrounded Sāmba, defeated him by unjust means, arrested him with Lakṣmaṇā and took them both to Hastināpura. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the Yādavas heard from Devarṣi Nārada of this injustice toward the Kauravas, they became angry. Taking permission from King Ugrasena, they prepared for war along with the Yādavas.

Duryodhana was Śrī Baladeva's disciple in the art of mace fighting. Baladeva being aware of the power of Kṛṣṇa, thought, "If Kṛṣṇa goes to battle, then Duryodhana may lose his life." Thus, out of compassion for His disciple, He pacified Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the Yādavas, and set off for Hastināpura with several brāhmaṇas and Yādava elders. While going, Baladeva was thinking that, upon His persuasion, His disciple Duryodhana would accept His words and free Sāmba along with Lakṣmaṇā. Camping on the outskirts of Hastināpura, He first sent Uddhava to ascertain King Dhṛtarāṣṭra's intentions. When Duryodhana and other Kauravas heard about Lord Balarāma's arrival from Uddhava, they joyfully went to Baladeva, taking auspicious items with them, and worshipped Him. After inquiring about each other's welfare, Lord Balarāma said, "You have captured Sāmba in an unjust fight. In order that there not be any hostilities between you and the Yādavas, I am telling you by the order of King Ugrasena that you should hand Sāmba over to us."

Upon hearing these words of Lord Baladeva, the Kauravas felt insulted and replied with fury, "Amazing! The Yādavas are trying to give orders to the Kauravas? Look at the crookedness of time, how the times have changed! Today, the leather shoe is eager to climb atop one's crowned head. It is because the Yādavas are related to us by the marital ties of Kunti Devī, that they have the opportunity of sharing our beds, seats and meals. Indeed, it is only by our mercy that they have been given royal thrones, and now they are thinking that they have become equal to us? It is certainly true that they are enjoying the royal crown, royal bed and other paraphernalia today by our mercy only. Just see, they have lost all shame and dare to command us like masters! These Yādavas will

surely have to step down from their royal position.”

nūnaṁ nānā-madonnaddhāḥ

śāntiṁ necchanty asādhavaḥ

teṣāṁ hi praśamo daṇḍaḥ

paśūnāṁ laguḍo yathā

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.68.31)

Upon seeing the misbehaviour of the Kauravas and hearing their abusive words, Balarāma became filled with rage and laughingly spoke as follows, “Those scoundrels who are intoxicated with the pride of wealth and power never want peace. Just as beasts do not show understanding without being beaten by a cudgel, scoundrels cannot come to their senses without physical punishment. I came here desiring the welfare of the Kauravas after pacifying the Yādavas, but they are so proud that they have disrespected Me. So, is King Ugrasena unfit to command the Kauravas when Indra and other planetary rulers are bound to obey his orders? That Lord Whose servant is Lakṣmī devī; the dust of Whose Lotus Feet is carried on the heads of Indra and other rulers of the universe; of Whose spiritual identity Brahma, Shiva and Myself are simply aṁśa-avatāras or even aṁśāṁśa-avatāras—is that very Kṛṣṇa not fit to sit on a royal throne? Are the Yādavas indeed like shoes whereas the Kauravas are like the head? I shall surely punish all these impudent Kauravas immediately.”

Thus, Śrī Baladeva, intending to rid the earth of all the Kurus and cast Hastināpura into the Gaṅgā, dug His plough weapon into the southern side of the city and began using it to drag Hastināpura. By the extra-mundane miraculous power of Baladeva, Sāmba was excluded from the submersion of Hastināpura. Upon seeing that Hastināpura was falling into the Gaṅgā due to being pulled by the tip of Balarāma’s plough, the Kauravas became terrified and, in great distress, cried out, “Trāhi Baladeva! (O Baladeva, please save us! Please save us!).” Putting Sāmba and Lakṣmaṇā in front of them, they approached,

surrendered before Lord Baladeva and began to pray, “O Lord, in Your Form of Ananta, You carry the Earth globe on one of Your heads. At the time of annihilation, You destroy the entire universe and lie down to rest on Śeṣa. Please rescue the Kauravas as we are ignorant and misguided.” The protector of the surrendered, Baladeva forgave them immediately with the words, “Mā bhaiḥ (Do not fear).” Baladeva also killed Narakāsura’s friend, the powerful ape, Dvivida, with His pestle and plough.

yādavendro ’pi taṁ dorbhyāṁ

tyaktvā muṣala-lāṅgale

jatrāv abhyardayat kruddhaḥ

so ’patad rudhiraṁ vaman

(Śrīmad Bhāgavatam 10.67.25)

“Then furious Baladeva hurled His pestle and plough with both hands, which struck the throat and arms of Dvivida. Dvivida died vomiting blood.”

namaste tu halagrama! namaste tu muṣalāyudha

namaste revatīkānta! namaste bhakta-vatsala

namaste balināṁ śreṣṭha! namaste dharaṇidhara

pralambāre! namaste tu trāhi mām kṛṣṇa purvaja

“Obeisances unto You, O holder of the plough. Obeisances unto You, O wielder of the pestle. Obeisances unto You, O beloved husband of Revatī. Obeisances unto You, O affectionate benefactor of Your devotees. Obeisances unto You, O

upholder of the Earth. Obeisances unto You, O best of the mighty. Obeisances unto You, O killer3 of the Pralambā demon. Please save me, O elder brother (Baladeva) of Kṛṣṇa."

To teach the people in general, Śrī Baladeva killed Romaharṣaṇa Sūta who was unqualified to recite Śrīmad Bhāgavatam. Later, He accepted the arrangement of the sages to atone for the sin of killing a brāhmaṇa. This incident is described in the Seventy-eighth Chapter of the Tenth Canto of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam as follows:

When Lord Baladeva heard of the possibility of war between the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas, in order to remain neutral, He left Dvārakā on the pretext of going on a pilgrimage. The Lord bathed in sacred places such as Prabhāsa and eventually came to the holy Naimiṣāraṇya Forest where great sages were performing an extended fire sacrifice. The sages rose from their sitting places and worshipped Baladeva. Baladeva accepted a seat, and after sitting down, the Lord noticed that Romaharṣaṇa Sūta, who was a disciple of Vyāsadeva and a member of the pratiloma sūta caste, was sitting on a higher seat than the other sages, and was also bereft of the etiquette of standing up to welcome the Lord. Lord Balarāma thought, "He is not qualified to recite the Bhāgavatam. He is only performing a recitation of the Bhāgavatam for his livelihood. He is vainly proud of falsely assuming himself to be a scholar. He is a greater sinner than the people who engage in sin." Baladeva Prabhu, the Protector of religion, then killed Romaharṣaṇa with a blade of kuśā grass which was in His hand. The sages, distressed by the death of Romaharṣaṇa Sūta, prayed to Baladeva, "We gave Romaharṣaṇa Sūta the seat of the spiritual master and granted him a long life so that he could remain alive until the end of our yajña, but You were not able to understand our motive. Therefore, to set a perfect example for the people in general, it would be good for you to undergo the prescribed atonement for slaying a brāhmaṇa." When Baladeva asked the sages about the atonement for killing a brāhmaṇa, the sages requested Baladeva as follows: "Romaharṣaṇa, who was killed by You, had also been awarded a long life by us. Please preserve the truth of both of these incidents." Śrī Baladeva, following the Vedic maxim that 'one's son takes birth as one's own self', granted Romaharṣaṇa's son, Ugraśravā, the position of speaker of the Purāṇas, and awarded him a long life with unfailing sensory capacity.

Baladeva performed His pastime of disappearance after the destruction of the Yadu dynasty.

Footnotes:

1.There may be doubt whether the word ‘portion’ is appropriate for expressing the expanded Forms of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, expanded Forms of Baladeva or puruṣa-avatāras et cetera, because all the expanded Forms are ontologically non-different from each other. Differences exist only in the manifestation of qualities. As all Forms are transcendental, Their qualities are also transcendental. It is better to write ‘aṁśa-avatāra’ or ‘aṁśāṁśa-avatāra’. The word ‘avatāra’ should be added to avoid confusion.

svāṁśa-vistāra— catur-vyūha, avatara-gaṇa

vibhinnāṁśa jīva— tāṅra śaktite gaṇana

(Caitanya Caritāmṛta) Verse number ?

2. The   Causal Ocean of Creation (material energy consisting of three primal qualities—sattva-guna, rajo-guna and tamo-guna in a dormant state). (Does the following statement belong in the place I’ve put it?) ‘Sa aikhata eko’ham bahuśyāmi’: Kāraṇodakaśāyī Mahā-Viṣṇu observes and desires to become many so He imparts conscious energy and infinite Brahmaṇḍas are created.

3.Only fortunate persons are killed by the Supreme Lord Himself. As a result, they attain a meritorious destination.

Sri Buddha Avatara

Among the Dasavatara, Sri Buddha is the ninth avatara. Additionally, Sri Buddha is the twenty-fourth lila-avatara.

In order to condemn the practice of animal sacrifice, Supreme Lord Vishnu appeared in the form of Buddha. Srila Jayadeva Gosvami prays to the Lord of the universe in his Dasavatara-stotra:

nindasi yajna-vidher ahaha sruti-jatam
sadaya-hridaya-darsita-pasu-ghatam
kesava dhrita-buddha-sarira jaya jagadisa hare
(Sri Jayadeva's Dasavatara-stotra, 9th Verse)

"O Kesava! O Lord of the universe! O Lord Hari, who have assumed the form of Buddha! All glories unto You! O Buddha of compassionate heart, You decry the slaughtering of poor animals performed according to the rules of Vedic sacrifice."

The name of Buddha also appears in the verse that describes the ten avataras in Srimad-Bhagavatam:

matsya kurmo varahasca nrisimha vamanastatha
ramo ramasca ramasca buddha kalki ca te dasah

In the dasavatara verse of Sahitya-darpana (a Bengali reference encyclopedia), we find the names of Buddha and Kalki. The Agni, Vayu and Skanda Puranas also mention the name of Buddha, as does the following verse of Srimad-Bhagavatam:

tatah kalau sampravritte sammohaya sura-dvisham
buddho namnanjana-sutah kikateshu bhavishyati
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.3.24)

"Then, in the beginning of Kali-yuga the Lord will appear as Lord Buddha, the son of Anjana, in the province of Gaya (Bihar) just for the purpose of infatuating those who are envious of the faithful demigods."

In Chapters 17-18 of the 3rd Section of Vishnu Purana, Buddha has been designated as 'Mayamoha'. Once, while bathing in the waters of the Yamuna, Akrura was astonished to see Krishna-Balarama within the river. Coming out, he saw Them seated in a chariot as They had been before appearing in the water. Again he immersed himself in the water, and saw the yellow-clad four-handed Vasudeva Sri Krishna along with His associates, graciously seated on the lap of the thousand-hooded Sri Anantadeva while being worshiped by Brahma and other demigods. At that time, he prayed to the Lord in the following manner:

namo buddhaya suddhaya daitya-danava-mohine
mleccha-praya-kshatra-hantre namas te kalki-rupine
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 10.40.22)

"O Lord! I offer my obeisances unto Your form of Buddha, who, possessing a faultless nature, deluded the miscreants by composing anti-Vedic scriptures. I also offer obeisances unto Your Kalki form, the annihilator of the wicked kshatriyas who are no better than barbarians."

The Vedas encode instructions according to the eligibility or qualification of various living beings, especially human beings. But in the course of time, ignorant men took the tamasika orders to be the only instruction of the Vedas and engaged in the extensive killing of animals, sometimes even sacrificing human beings during worship of the demigods. At that time, the Supreme Lord descended in the form of Buddha and outwardly rejected the teachings of the Vedas for the welfare of human beings incapable of comprehending the true teachings of the Vedas. This implies that He disputed and cancelled His own prior teachings, propounded the futility of belief in God and preached to human beings four noble truths, to free them from their violent practices. This act of Buddha provided instantaneous benediction to mankind of that period. As Lord Buddha was the Supreme Lord Himself, many people resolved to follow ahimsa-dharma-the path of non-violence, due to His influence. As a result of non-violence, the hearts of human beings became pious and their qualifications gradually increased, so Lord Siva appeared as Sankaracarya. He re-established the supreme authenticity and decorum of the Vedas, and founded the philosophy of 'brahmakarana-vada' (Brahman as ultimate cause). In later ages, the Vaishnava

stalwarts built the philosophy of bhakti upon this same foundation stone. From the personal and aggregate point of view, these are the steps of progress.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, who is the Lord Himself, removed the incompleteness of the previously propagated philosophies through His ‘acintya-bhedabheda-tattva’ philosophy (the principle of inconceivable simultaneous distinction and non-distinction).

It is said that Sakyasimha Buddha, the son of Suddhodana and Maya, and Buddha-avatara, the Vaishnavas’ object of adoration, are not one and the same person. Our Most Revered Nityalilapravishta Om Vishnupada 108 Sri Srimad Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Prabhupada has clearly said, "Sakyasimha Buddha was merely a vastly learned person, so we cannot call him the original Buddha or Lord Buddha."

Acarya Sri Sankara has by mistake referred to Maya’s son, Buddha, as 'Sugata Buddha' in the following commentary:

sarvatha api anadaraniya ayam sugata-samayah sreyaskamaih iti abhiprayah

Amarakosha-grantha (Sanskrit dictionary) states:

sarvajnah sugato buddho dharmarajastathagatah
samastabhadro bhagavan marajillokajijjinah
shadabhijno dasabalo ’dvayavadi vinayakah
munindrah srighanah sasta munih sakyamunistu yah

"All-Knowing, Transcendental, Buddha, King of Righteousness, He Who Has Come, Beneficent, All-Encompassing, Lord, Conqueror of the God of Love-Mara, Victorious of Three Worlds, He Who Controls His Senses, Protector from the Six Enemies, Possessor of the Ten Powers, Speaker of Monism (One Absolute), Teacher, Lord of the Sages, Embodiment of Splendor and Eminent Saint." In his commentary on the above verse, Srila Ragunatha Cakravarti has written:

"All eighteen names of Buddha from 'sarvajna' (omniscient) to 'sakyamuni', refer to Vishnu-avatara Buddha. Therefore, 'Sugata' clearly refers only to Vishnu-avatara Buddha."

sa sakyasimhah sarvarthasiddhah sauddhodanisca sah
gautamascarkabandhusca mayadevisutasca sah

"Teacher of the Sakyas, lion of the Sakyas, accomplisher of all goals, son of Suddhodana, of Gautama's line, friend of scholars, son of Mayadevi." Here, Srila Ragunatha Cakravarti has written:

ete sapta shakyabangshabatirneh buddhamuni bisheshe

"The seven aliases from 'sakyasimha Buddha' down to 'mayadevisuta' (the son of Mayadevi) refer to monks belonging to the Sakya Dynasty."

Thus, Sugata Buddha and Sunyavadi (Sakyasimha) Buddha are not the same person. Further evidence is found in Mr. H.T.Colebrooke’s Amarakosha, published at Ramapura in 1807. It is written in Chapter 21, Page 178 of Lalitavistara-grantha that Gautama Buddha performed penances at the same place as the previous Buddha (Vishnu-avatara Buddha). Maybe it is for this reason that in later ages he and Lord Buddha are considered as being one:

esha dharanimunde purvabuddhasanasthah
samartha dhanurgrihitva sunya nairatmavanaih
klesaripum nihatva drishtijalanca bhitva-siva
virajamsokam prapsyate bodhimagryam

Currently this place is known as Buddha Gaya but Srimad-Bhagavatam refers to it as Kikata Pradesa:

tatah kalau sampravritte sammohaya sura-dvisham
buddho namnanjana-sutah kikateshu bhavishyati
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.3.24)

"Thereafter, in the twenty-first manvantara at the beginning of Kali-yuga, the Lord will appear as Lord Buddha, the son of Anjana, in Kikata Pradesa (the province of Gaya-Bihar), just for the purpose of deluding those who are envious of the faithful demigods."
According to Sri Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura’s commentary:

anjana suto 'jina sutasceti pathadvayam
kikateshu madhye gayapradese

"The names Anjanasuta and Ajinasuta can both be found in the above verse. The province of Gaya has been called Kikateshu."
Srila Sridhara Svamipada has written in his commentary:

buddhavataramaha tata iti
anjanasya sutah
ajinasuta iti pathe ajino ’pi sa eva
kikateshu madhye gayapradese

"Buddha-avatara refers to Buddha who is the son of Anjana, and also in another reading, the son of Ajina. In the above verse, the name is written as Ajina or Anjana, and Kikata refers to Gaya Pradesa."

It is written in the 29th Verse, 36th Chapter of Sri Nrisimha Purana:

kalau prapte yatha buddho bhavennarayana prabhuh

"Lord Narayana appeared as Buddha when the age of Kali started."

This clearly implies that Lord Buddha appeared five thousand years ago. The following verse can be found in the second paragraph of Nirnaya-sindhu:

jyaishtha sukladitiyayam buddhajanma bhavishyati

"Buddha will take birth on the 2nd day of the sukla-paksha of the month of Jyaishtha."

Another part of this book describes the mode of worshipping Buddha:

pausha suklasya saptamyam kuryyat bhuddhasya pujanam

"Worship Lord Buddha on the 7th day of the sukla-paksha of the month of Pausha."
This is the prescription for the worship of Buddha, the avatara of the Supreme Lord. The full moon day of the month of Vaisakha, known as 'Buddha-purnima', is to be celebrated for both Buddhas, subject to consideration of both Buddhas together.

In Sri Madhvacarya's commentary on Verse 1.3.24 of Srimad-Bhagavatam, from his book Bhagavata-tatparya, the following quotation from Brahmanda Purana has been referred to:

mohanartham danavanam balarupi pathisthitah
putram tam kalpayamasa mudhabudhirjinah svayam
tatah sammohayamasa jinadyana suramsakan
bhagavan vagbhirugrabhirahimsa vacibhirharih
(Brahmanda Purana)

"In order to delude the demons, He (Lord Buddha) was present in the form of a child on the way while the fool, Jina (a demon), imagined Him to be his son. Later on, Lord Sri Hari (as avatara-Buddha) expertly deluded Jina and other demons by His strong words of non-violence."

There is an authentic Buddhist book, Lankavatara-sutra, in which Ravana, the king of Lanka, prays to Jina's son, the ancient Lord Buddha, and to all the Buddhas and Buddhas' sons who would appear in the future, via this eulogy (stava):

atha ravano lankadhipatih gathagiten anugayati sma lankavatarasutram vaih
purvabuddhanuvarnitam smarami purvakaih buddhairjinaputra-puraskritaih
putrametannigadyate bhagavanapi bhashatam bhavishyantyanapate kale
buddha buddhasutasca ye

Therefore, this source leaves no doubt that the ancient avatara-Buddha and the modern Gautama Buddha are not the same person.

Buddha-avatara has been discussed in various Puranas such as the Linga, Bhavishya, Varaha, Agni, Vayu, Skanda, Vishnu and many others. In the 17th and 18th Chapters of the 3rd Section of Vishnu Purana, Buddha is referred to as Mayamoha. It should be remembered that the Buddha-avatara whose narrations are found in various Puranas and other scriptures, is not the nihilistic Buddha, the son of Suddhodana.

namo buddhaya suddhaya daitya danava mohine

The preceding eulogy to Lord Buddha, taken from Akrura's prayer in Srimad-Bhagavatam (10-40-22), is the essence of all the Vedas, Vedanta, Puranas,

Itihasas and other scriptures. The meaning of this prayer is:

“O Lord, I offer my obeisances unto Your faultless beguiling form of Lord Buddha who enchanted the demons and devils by composing anti-Vedic mantras.”

Commenting on this, Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura has written:

suddhaya vedaviruddha sastra pravarttakatve ’pi nirddoshaya

"The meaning of the word 'suddhaya' is that although He is the founding element of anti-Vedic literature, yet He remains inculpable."

Therefore, by establishing sastras opposed to the Vedas, He (avatara- Buddha) hypnotised devils and demons. This is the reason why some writers of Buddha’s biography consider avatara-Buddha and human Buddha to be the same.

In Srimad-Bhagavatam (6.8.19), King Indra prays to Lord Buddha with the mantra, *buddhas tu pashanda-gana-pramadat*. This mantra is from the Narayana-kavaca of Visvarupa, the son of Sage Tvashta. By reciting this mantra Indra prayed, "O Lord Buddha! Save me from the defect of indifference born out of atheistic hypocrisy."

This means that Lord Buddha, in His asura-vimohana-lila (the pastime of hypnotising the demons), deluded the wicked natured people by establishing scriptures opposed to the Vedas. "Save me Lord Buddha from the terrible offence of disobeying the Vedas due to ignorance of their secret meanings." Factually, Lord Buddha is not a condemner of the Vedas for any reason whatsoever. This pastime is meant only to mesmerise the demons. It is written in the 40th chapter of the Mahesvara section of Skanda Purana that:

"After the passing of 3,600 years of Kali-yuga, Lord Buddha, the avatara of Vishnu, the saviour of dharma, will appear in the Magadha territory from the womb of Anjani, fathered by Hemasadana. He will perform many glorious tasks and rule over the earth containing seven islands, for sixty-four years. Then, safeguarding His glories with His devotees, He will retreat to His abode."

Thus, we can see by the authentic words of genuine scriptures, that Lord Buddha and Sakyasimha/Gautama Buddha are not the same. The Lord has established

many anti-Vedic scriptures for deluding the demons. Other Buddhas also followed Him and propagated anti-Vedic nihilism. That is why many doubts arise, as all of them have been mentioned together in several places. Srila Krishnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami has written:

veda na maniya baudha haya ta nastika

"Without respecting the Vedas, Buddha has become atheistic." In India, those who have no faith in the Vedas are considered to be atheistic.

According to the German scholar Max Muller, Sakyasimha Buddha was born in the Lumbini Forest of Kapilavastu in 477 B.C. Ancient Kapilavastu is a famous district situated near Nepal. Gautama's father's name was Suddhodana and His mother's name was Mayadevi. Anjana's son and Maya's son both share the same name but one appeared at Gaya and the other at Kapilavastu. Thus, the appearance places and parents of Vishnu Buddha and Gautama Buddha are totally different. Because the human Buddha was unable to understand the asura-vimohana-lila of Lord Vishnu Buddha, he propagated anti-Vedic nihilism.

A Short Biography of Gautama Buddha

There was a king of the Ikshvaku Dynasty named Sujata, ruling in the western side of Saketa Nagara. Sujata had five sons and five daughters. He had special affection for his five sons.

Coincidently, Sujata met a flirtatious woman by the name of Jenti. By her he begot a son, Jayanta. As Sujata was in love with Jenti, he became desirous to give her a boon. Jenti prayed for the exile of Sujata’s other five sons and for her own son, Jayanta, to be crowned as heir to the throne. Although Sujata was deeply disappointed upon hearing Jenti’s words, still he felt compelled to grant her the boon so as to fulfil his own promise. The people were saddened when they heard of the exile of Sujata's sons, and consequently they accompanied them to the forest. The first place they reached was Kasi-kosala state, but eventually they came to the asrama of Kapila Rishi in the Himalayan region. At the asrama of Kapila Rishi, Sujata's sons fell in love with Kapila's daughters and subsequently married them. Hearing the news of his sons' marriage, Sujata also went to the asrama. Upon hearing all the relevant details, he declared the marriage to be proper and gave it his approval. Afterwards, Sujata's sons were known by the name 'Sakya'.

With the permission of Kapila Rishi, the Sakya-kumaras built a large city named Kapilavastu. The eldest son, Apura, became the king of that city and a beautiful girl named Amita was born into his dynasty. As an adult she became afflicted with leprosy and because of this, her brother took her away to the Himalayan Mountains. There, he enclosed her in a large cave stocked with many foodstuffs. Before returning he shut the entrance to the cave with a large boulder. Fortunately, Amita's leprosy was eventually cured by the cave’s heat and she regained her lost beauty. Then, fortune continuing to smile upon her, a tiger came and removed the boulder obstructing the entrance to the cave.

Once, a king by the name of Kola went there and saw the beautiful girl Amita. They married and she later gave birth to thirty-two sons. Reaching maturity, the sons came to know about their ancestors from their mother. Consequently, they came to Kapilavastu and in the course of events, married the Sakyas daughters. Thereafter, they came to be known as the 'Kaliya Dynasty'.

In the land of the Sakyas was a district named Devadeha. The king of Devadeha, Subhuti, had five daughters. The king of Kapilavastu, Suddhodana, married two daughters of Subhuti named Maya and Mahaprajavati Gautami. On the full moon day of the month of Vaisakha, Mayadevi gave birth to a son in a beautiful garden called Lumbini, near Kapilavastu. It appeared that with the birth of a son, all the desires of Suddhodana had been fulfilled, thus he named his son Sarvartha-siddhi or alternatively, Siddhartha. Seven days after Siddhartha's birth, his mother Mayadevi died. At that time, Siddhartha was brought to Kapilavastu to be brought up by his mother's sister, Mahaprajavati Gautami.

A sage named Asita happened to live near the Himalayas. He came to Kapilavastu and upon seeing the twelve symptoms of a great person in Siddhartha, prophesied that if he continued to live within his worldly circuit, he would eventually go on to become a great emperor, but if he renounced his home he would become the knower of all knowledge-"Sambodhi." Therefore, Buddha was formerly known as Siddhartha, Gautama and Sakyasimha, and later became famous with yet one more name-"Boddhisattva."

In accordance with the Indian custom, upon reaching adulthood, he was sent to his gurudeva’s house for a proper education. From Visvamitra Upadhyaya he learned Brahmi, Kharoshtri, Pushkarasadi, Angalipi and sixty-four other languages of various countries. He also became an expert in the Vedas and

Upanishads. After returning from his guru’s home, his father, Suddhodana, arranged for his marriage to Gopa, the daughter of Dandapani Sakya.

Although Siddhartha's father tried to ensnare him in worldly matters through marriage, Siddhartha was not at all interested in affairs of the world. Since childhood he had learned of the transient nature of things, so he possessed natural apathy for this world.

The causes of Siddhartha's apathy toward the material world have been described in the following way: One day, Siddhartha was going by chariot to visit a garden when he saw an extremely aged person who had been forsaken by his relatives. He was in a very weak and helpless condition. Seeing this old man, Siddhartha started to ponder over the observation that the human beings of this world are all so ignorant. Old age is inevitable and bound to attack all, one day or another.

Another day, at the southern gate of the city, Siddhartha saw a sick man in a very pitiful state who was smeared all over with excrement and urine. Seeing him, Siddhartha contemplated the fact that diseases are extremely dreadful. He found it very surprising that learned persons, despite being aware of these facts, were often quite busy merrymaking.

One day, at the western gate of the city, Siddhartha saw a dead man surrounded by a group of people who were hysterically lamenting and wailing in mournfulness. Seeing this sight, Siddhartha decided that there is no value to this life as it may end at any time.

Another day, at the northern gate of the city, Siddhartha saw a calm, abstemious and serious brahmacari (a celibate monk) peacefully wandering around with a begging bowl. The brahmacari mendicant, having given up all lust, material desires and pleasures while embracing asceticism, was wandering about in search of peace of mind and tranquillity. He was supporting his life by the collecting of very simple foodstuffs. Seeing his tranquil personage, devoid of all sorts of attachment and envy, Siddhartha decided that only this kind of lifestyle would provide eternal benediction to all living beings.

Observing Siddhartha's detachment from mundane issues, Suddhodana tried extremely hard to engage him in household life, but all his efforts went in vain. Siddhartha's charioteer, Chandoga, also advised him that he would never again

obtain such a prosperous, affluent and pleasing place like Kapilavastu, even after rigorous penance. He further stated that it would be most inappropriate for him to leave his beautiful wife. Though Chandoga tried to negatively influence Siddhartha's urge to renounce this mundane world, he too failed in this task and at the midnight of Pushya-nakshatra-tithi, Siddhartha renounced the world.

At the time of renouncing the world, Siddhartha gave all the jewels he was wearing to his charioteer Chandoga. He even destroyed and threw away the crest on his forehead and donned saffron clothes. The three respective locations where Siddhartha separated from Chandoga, destroyed his crest and put on saffron clothes have been established as caitya (shrine).

Chandoga then returned to the capital, gave all the jewels of Siddhartha to King Suddhodana and narrated the whole incident to him. Upon hearing the details of Siddhartha's renunciation, overwhelmed by sorrow, his father began weeping. Seeing no possibility of Siddhartha's return, the grief stricken Suddhodana threw all the extremely precious jewels (abharana) of Siddhartha into a pond. Since that time the pond has been known by the name of Abharana.

When Siddhartha's wife awoke in the morning and heard the news of the renunciation of her husband, out of intense grief she cut off all her beautiful hair and cast away all the jewels from her body. She fell to the ground like a person severely wounded by a weapon and began weeping "Oh! I have lost all the pleasures of my life."

After giving up the world, Buddha or Bodhisattva, initially went to Vaisali City and observing the vow of celibacy, took initiation from Arariakalama Upadhyaya. He remained there for some time without finding any happiness, and eventually left for Magadha. There, he started begging for food for himself. When the Magadha king, Bimbisara, came to know about Siddhartha, he desired to give his whole empire to him. However, Bodhisattva replied, "These sensuous objects are poisonous. They are the treasure houses of unlimited vices. Afflicted by lust, people indulging in sensuous enjoyment, experience hellish torture. I regard the carnal desire as hateful as phlegm and bile. I have accepted asceticism with the desire to attain boddhatva".

Bimbisara said, "I am a disciple of your father Suddhodana. If you attain boddhatva, I shall also follow this dharma (religion)". After that, Bodhisattva remained with Upadhyaya Rudraka for some time and undertook a spiritual

education. There, while studying theology, he realised that the fire of knowledge is ignited only after the absolute disappearance of the desire to enjoy.

After this, he undertook severe penance for six years on the bank of Nairanjana River, near Uruvilva Village of Gaya. Gradually, his body began to whittle away. When Bodhisattva sat down in a yogic posture at Bodhidruma near the Nairanjana River, the enemy of sad-dharma, Mara (Kandarpa or Cupid, the god of sensuous love) tried to prevent him from attaining boddhatva. Rati (sexual pleasure), Trishna (greed) and Arati (affection) came in the form of three damsels and tried to distort and divert his attention by their numerous antics, but to no avail. Thus, Bodhisattva defeated Mara and his cohorts Rati, Trishna and Arati, and achieved absolute tranquillity.

Upon ascertaining the cause of the world's sorrows and the method of its prevention, Bodhisattva adopted the name ‘Buddha’ (the Enlightened One). He ascertained the cause of sorrow in the following twelve steps starting from one’s previous birth (bhavacakra): 1) avidya (ignorance) causes 2) samskaras (impressions, present life volitional formations), which cause 3) vijnana (knowledge), which leads to 4) namarupa (mind and form). Namarupa causes 5) shadayatana (sense perceptions or sense bases), which cause 6) sparsa (contact), which causes 7) vedana (pain or feeling) leading to 8) trishna (greed or craving). Trishna leads to 9) upadana (attachment), which causes 10) bhava (future life-becoming), which causes 11) jati (birth), which leads to 12) jara-marana (old age and death) as well as concomitant sorrow and other related miseries. Thus, ignorance or lack of knowledge is the cause of all miseries. After the attainment of boddhatva, Buddha stayed in Bodhidruma for one week.

By the influence of Buddhadeva, fifty-four Yuvarajas (crown princes), one thousand pilgrims, Sari's son-Maudgalyayana, and many other persons accepted Buddhism. When Buddhadeva came to Kapilavastu City, his father, Suddhodana was astonished to see him. Buddha's son-Rahul, stepbrother Nanda and cousins Aniruddha and Ananda Devadatta, also took shelter of the religion or sect founded by Buddhadeva. Prasenjit, the king of Kosala, also took initiation into Buddhism. After this, the king of Magadha, Bimbisara, along with his wife and many other persons, accepted Buddhism.

During his stay in Patali Village, Buddha educated the resident religious practitioners on the subject of the eradication of sorrow. He spoke about four noble truths: 1) the fact that suffering exists 2) the cause of suffering 3) the

cessation of suffering and 4) the path one should follow to end suffering.

This world is full of miseries. There are specific reasons for these miseries and a method for inhibiting them. According to Buddha, it is useless to reason about or discuss on the basis of scripture, the form of the living being, the form of the Supreme Absolute or the form of the world. For example, say an arrow has pierced the chest of a person and he is writhing in immense pain. In such a situation, is it not useless to think about where the arrow came from and how it caused the injury? In the preceding circumstances, to pull the arrow out would be the best way of relieving the pain. In order to establish the propriety of such thoughts of Buddha, Buddhist philosophy was developed at a later date. No ‘ism’ of any kind can be adequately established without a foundation of proper philosophical principles.

According to Buddhist scriptures, hunger is more painful than disease and similarly, life is comparatively more troublesome than sorrow. Old age, disease, death and miseries are all concerns of the body. Therefore, until the cycle of birth and death of the body ends, miseries will continue. To restrict the misery-ridden aspect of life is final emancipation (nirvana), and only final emancipation can be the greatest pleasure.

jighaccha parama roga sankhara parama duhkham
etam natva yathabhutam nirvanam paramam sukham

According to Buddhist philosophy, nothing is stable for even more than a moment-neither the soul nor God possess stability. Here, the point to be pondered is that if the soul is impermanent, then upon what basis could the thesis of birth and rebirth be accepted? However, in Buddhist philosophy the concept of rebirth has in fact been accepted. To answer this doubt, the Buddhist philosophy states that when a body constituted of rupa-skandha (gross and subtle bodies), vedana-skandha (pain), samjna-skandha (difference), samskara-skandha (impressions) and vijnana-skandha (knowledge) appears in an aggregate of things, we erroneously think that to be the soul. Similarly, the rupa-vedana-skandha appears and disappears (or in other words, the material form is destroyed) every moment. According to Buddhism, existence does not end immediately after the destruction of the body. After death five types of births occur, although these are deemed as 'new birth' rather than 'rebirth'. This sequence ends with the destruction of greed and karma, and then finally the state of emancipation is attained. In other words, in Buddhist philosophy the veracity

of the eternal soul, Vedas and Supreme Lord has been disregarded, which is why it is considered to be an atheistic philosophy.

After the disappearance of Buddha, this dharma was divided into two branches- 'Hinayana' (Lesser Vehicle) and 'Mahayana' (Greater Vehicle). The followers of Hinayana have accepted the teachings of Buddha without deviation. This sect is not accessible to all, as it is the method for powerful and self-dependent devotees.

Over the course of time, the Buddhist religion was propagated to several countries where people following other religious systems gave up their particular faith and accepted Buddhist dharma. Consequently, sparks of emotions from the sentimental plane of their previously practised faiths and religions became transubstantiated into Buddhism. Therefore, the purity and rigidity of the Buddhist religion was compromised to a large extent. These transformed and expanded branches of Buddhism are called 'Mahayana'. This Mahayana sect is accessible to the general populace. A branch of Mahayana followers say that creation takes place from the void (sunya) and that dissolution returns to the void. Only the void is true and all other things are false. Nowadays, there is another branch under Mahayana, which regards Buddha as God, and regards faith in the Supreme Lord as a valid method.

In Buddhism, the procedure for attaining the state of 'sambodhi' or the state of final emancipation (nirvana), has been described in the following way:

Firstly, the five obstructions should be eradicated, i.e. kama (lust), himsa (violence), alasya (laziness or slothfulness), vicikitsa (doubt) and moha (ignorance). After this, the twenty-four negative emotions of the heart should be removed, i.e. krodha (anger), upanah (confinement), mrikshapradana (hypocrisy), irshya (envy or jealousy), matsarya (malice), sathya, (wickedness), maya (delusion), mada (pride), nihimsa (killing), ahri (shamelessness), anapatrata (harshness), styana (stealing), uddhatya (haughtiness), asraddha (disrespect), kaupinya (sinfulness), pramada (inadvertence), mushitasmritita (remembrance of stolen things), vikshepa (distraction), asamprajanya-kaukritya (condemnable illicit birth), siddha (the seduction of material perfections or achievements), vitarka (argument) and vicara (thought). In short, the body is impure, distress is sorrowful, the heart is restless or fickle and matter is false. These four facts should always be kept in mind. Finally, the attributes of higher knowledge, memory, pious deeds, strength, affection, inquiry, emancipation and

detachment must be cultivated. Only then can the state of samadhi be achieved.

There is no scripture directly written by Gautama Buddha himself. The disciples and subsequent followers of Buddhadeva have scripted his teachings in the Pali language. They are divided into three parts known as 1) Sukta-pitaka 2) Vinaya-pitaka and 3) Abhidharma-pitaka.

At a time when failure to comprehend the actual meaning of the scriptural teachings and consequently, violence in the guise of religion took precedence, the Supreme Lord appeared in the form of Buddha and rid mankind of such violence. It is for this very reason that non-violence (ahimsa) is regarded as the basis of Buddhism.

During his reign, the emperor of Magadha, King Asoka, developed a keen interest in Buddhism. He was deeply aggrieved by the merciless massacre in the Kalinga War, and this transformed his heart. After this event, he took initiation into Buddhism from Upagupta, a Buddhist monk, and devoted himself to the preaching of the religion. Buddhism outside India was preached in China, Burma (Myanmara or Brahmadesa), Tibet, Japan, Thailand, Korea and Sri Lanka (South Simhala) and other places. Buddhism was propounded and propagated from India. However, due to the preaching of Sankaracarya, the effect of Buddhism in modern India is not prominently visible, as very few followers remain.

FOOTNOTES

[1] The mode of ignorance.
[2] In the scriptures animal sacrifice is specified to enable society to gradually rise above violent tendencies.

[3] Suta means “son.”

[4] Sukla-paksha: The moonlit half of a lunar month-the bright fortnight.

[5] Yaishtha: The 2nd month of the Hindu (Lunar) calendar (Summer).

[6] Pausha: the 9th month of the Hindu (Lunar) Calendar (Winter).

[7] Vaishakha month: the 1st month of the Hindu (Lunar) Calendar.

[8] Lankavatara-sutra was published with the help of the Indian Buddhist Text Society and Bengal Government in January 1900 A.D.

[9] In the 21st issue of the 18th volume of Gaudiya (Magazine), in the articles of Srila Saccidananda Bhaktivinoda Thakura entitled, ‘Pracchanna Bauddha and Nastikyavada’ (Disguised Bauddha and Atheism) and ‘Gautama’ as well as in the book ‘Sri Gaudiya Darshana: History and Elements’ by Sri Sundarananda Vidyavinoda (a disciple of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Thakura), the name of Sakyasimha Gautama Buddha has rarely appeared while writing about the Buddhist philosophy. Pujyapada Tridandi Svami Srimad Bhakti Prajnana Keshava Maharaja, the beloved disciple of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Thakura and founder of Sri Gaudiya Vedanta Samiti, in his writing, ‘Mayavadera Jivani’ (The Life History of Impersonalism), has written: “The lila of the Supreme Lord, the expansion of the Lord, Buddha, appeared around 3500 B.C.” (Page 74) “Nihilistic Siddhartha was the disciple of Sage Gautama of Kapila’s lineage. Therefore, his other name is Gautama.” (Page 14) “Sakyasimha Buddha appeared around five hundred years before.” (Page 18)

[10] Buddha married Yashodhara at the age of sixteen years. Buddha renounced the world at the age of twenty-nine years. He attained emancipation at the age of eighty years (New Bengali Dictionary of Ashutosh Dev)

[11] Gaya Region: This is famous as Bodha Gaya or Buddha Gaya. This is the most important pilgrimage place of Buddhists. This place was famous even before the time of Christ. The remains of the Mahabodhi Temple and the Stupa (monument), built by King Ashoka, are evidence of its fame and antiquity. The Pippala tree (ficus religiosa), under which Buddha attained enlightenment, is still there today. In the journey diary of the Chinese traveller, Fahiyan, a description of the Mahabodhi Temple of Uruvilva has been provided.

[From "Dasavatara - The Ten Manifestations of God" by His Divine Grace Sri Srimad Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj.]

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu‘s Sankirtan Movement

Under the banner of Sankirtan Procession, people of all sects can participate irrespective of caste, creed and religion. It is the standing order of Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to preach His All-embracing, All-accommodating Universal Divine Love throughout the world— "Prithavi te ache jato nagar adi gram, sarvatra prachar hoibe mora nama". It is the desire of Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu that His message should not be confined only in India. The personal associates of Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu also advised their disciples to do this. For that purpose our Most Revered Gurudeva Srila Bhakti Dayita Madhav Goswami Maharaj, Founder of Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Math and His other Godbrothers, establishing different institutions are doing this.
All are invited to participate in the sankirtan congregation which will unite all under one flag.

Sri Dhananjay Pandit

vasudama sakha yat ca panditah sri-dhananjayah

Krishna’s friend Vasudama became Dhananjaya Pandit in Gaura-lila.
(Gaura-ganoddesa-dipika 127)

Dhananjaya Pandit was Nityananda Prabhu’s dear servant; he was very renounced and full of love for Krishna.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 1.11.31)

In the Gaudiya Vaisnava Abhidhana, it is said that he was born in the village of Jargram in Chittagong district on the fifth day of the waxing moon in the month of Chaitra, 1485. His father’s name was Sripati Bandyopadhyaya, his mother’s was Kalindi Devi, and his wife was Haripriya.

He would prostrate himself in obeisances before Tulasi Devi three times a day. He was married when very young, but this did not stop him from leaving on a pilgrimage shortly after his wedding. His wealthy father gave him money for traveling expenses, but Dhananjaya gave it all to Mahaprabhu and carried only a begging bowl. This particular action has been recalled by the author of the Vaishnava-vandana:

vilasi vairagi vandon pandita dhananjaya
sarvasva prabhure diya bhanda hate laya

Dhananjaya's main home or Sripat was in Shitala Gram. The deities of Gopinath, Nitai-Gauranga, and Damodar worshiped by him are still being served there. These deities are brought into a field not far from the temple where the disappearance day festival is held annually in the middle of Magh.

Dhananjaya Pandit participated for a few days with Mahaprabhu in His sankirtan pastimes in Nabadwip. From there, he returned to Shitala Gram whence he went on a pilgrimage to Vrindavan. Before traveling to Vrindavan, he stayed for a few days in Sanchara Panchara, leaving a disciple who was traveling with him in charge of the deity service. At present, there is no further sign of this temple in Sanchara Panchara.

Nityananda Prabhu delivered the most fallen and crushed the atheistic. These powers were manifest in his dear devotee, Dhananjaya. Dhananjaya Pandit converted many robbers and atheists in the Shitala Gram area.

Dhananjaya Pandit was an extraordinarily great Vaishnava. Nityananda took up permanent residence in his heart.
(Chaitanya Bhagavata 3.5.773)

As one enters the Shitala Gram temple, a small Tulasi altar stands on the left. This is the site of Dhananjaya Pandit's samadhi tomb.

His disappearance day is the sukla-astami of Kartik month.

Sri Gadadhara Pandit Goswami

shri-radha-prema-rupa ya pura vrindavandeshvari
sa shri-gadadharo gaura-vallabhah panditakhyakah
nirnitah shri-Svarupair yo vraja-lakshmitaya yatha
pura vrindavane lakshmih shyamasundara-vallabha
sadya gaura-prema-lakshmih shri-gadadhara-panditah
radham anugata yat tal lalitapy anuradhika
atah pravishad esha tam gaura-candrodaye yatha

The incarnation of love who previously was the queen of Vrindavan, Radha, is now the beloved of Gaura named Srila Gadadhara Pandit. Svarupa Damodar himself indicated that he was Vraja's goddess of fortune, the Lakshmi who was previously the beloved of Shyamasundara in Vrindavan. She today has become the goddess of fortune of love for Gaura and is known as Srila Gadadhara Pandit. Lalita, who is also known as Anuradha, is Radha's closest friend and confidante. She has also entered into Gadadhara, as was shown in the play Chaitanya-candrodaya.
(Gaura-ganoddesha-dipika 147-150)

Gadadhara-tattva

gadadhara panditadi prabhura nija-shakti
tan sabhara carane mora sahasra pranati
Gadadhara Pandit and others are the lord's own energies. I pay thousands of obeisances to their feet. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 1.1.41)

"Chaitanya Mahaprabhu appears in six features, namely as the two types of guru, the devotees of the lord, the lord himself, his incarnation, his expansion and his energy. According to the principle of simultaneous oneness and difference, they are all identified with Chaitanya Mahaprabhu himself."
(Anubhashya to Chaitanya Charitamrita 1.1.37-45)

She who was Radha in Krishna's pastimes became Srila Gadadhara Pandit

Goswami in Gaura's lila. When Gaura manifests his identity with Narayan, his shaktis are his wives Lakshmipriya and Vishnupriya. When identifying with Krishna, his shakti is Srila Gadadhara Pandit Goswami.

pancatattvatmakam krishnam
bhakta-rupa-Svarupakam
bhaktavataram bhaktakhyam
namami bhaktashaktikam

I offer my obeisances to Krishna who appears in five features, as a devotee, as the expansion of a devotee, as an incarnation of a devotee, as the pure devotee and as the devotional energy.

These five features all appeared with Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in his incarnation, and in their association, he joyfully performed the congregational chanting of the Holy Names. Though he appears in these five forms, there is in fact no difference between them. The distinctions arise due to his desire to relish different devotional flavors.

Sri Gauranga, Nityananda, Advaita, Gadadhara and Srivasa, etc., make up the Pancha Tattva and there is spiritually no difference between them. The supreme truth has unlimited different pastimes in order to relish the different tastes of transcendental relationship and thus he separates into these five forms as the form of devotee, the devotional manifestation, the devotional incarnation, the devotional energy and the pure devotee.

jaya jaya nityananda-gadadharera jivana
jaya jaya advaitadi bhaktera sharana

All glories, all glories, to the life of Nityananda and Gadadhara!
All glories, all glories, to the shelter of all the devotees, headed by Advaita!

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur comments on words "the life of Gadadhara" as follows: "Srila Gadadhara Pandit Goswami is chief amongst the most intimate devotees of Sri Chaitanya. He is the fountainhead of the entire shakti-tattva and is thus present equally in Mahaprabhu's lilas in Nabadwip and in Nilachala. His childhood home was in Nabadwip; later when he took sannyas, he went to live in Jagannath Puri, in a garden or tota by the seashore. Pure devotees who wish to enter into the madhura-rasa of worship to Radha and

Govinda take shelter of Gadadhara Pandit and are known as Gauranga Mahaprabhu's intimate devotees. Those devotees who are not so inclined take shelter of Nityananda Prabhu and engage in pure devotional service in his mood. Some of Mahaprabhu's devotees, such as Narahari, were followers of Srila Gadadhara Pandit Goswami. They took refuge in him because they knew him to be his dearest associate and thus worthy of their service. Some devotees therefore call Chaitanya 'the life of Nityananda' while others called him 'the life of Gadadhara.'"

Early Life

Gadadhara Pandit was born in the village of Beleti Gram in the Chittagong district of modern Bangladesh in a family of Varendra Brahmins in 1408 of the Shaka era (i.e., 1486 AD) on the dark moon day of the month of Vaishakh. His father was Madhava Mishra and his mother Ratnavati Devi. He also had a younger brother named Baninath. He belongs to the Kashyapa gotra. He lived in the village of Beleti until he was twelve and then moved with his family to Nabadwip.
Srila Gadadhara Pandit Goswami was a brahmachari for his entire life. Isvara Puripada was very impressed by his indifference to the pleasures of the world and out of affection for him gave him instruction in his own work, Krishna-lilamrita.

While Mahaprabhu was delighting in his pastimes as a student, there was no scholar in the town of Nabadwip who was not afraid of entering into debate with him. Mahaprabhu would defeat one's position and then show how the same position could be defended. Mukunda, Srivasa and others who knew the joys of the devotional sentiment were afraid of getting involved in such useless debates with Nimai Pandit and so they would avoid him. One day, Nimai Pandit saw Gadadhara and asked him to give the definition of liberation. Gadadhara answered according to the Nyaya school, that liberation consisted in the final eradication of all miseries (atyantika duhkha-nivritti). Nimai then proceeded to show how this definition was inadequate. The other devotees who were listening thought how wonderful it would be if such a brilliant scholar became a devotee. (Chaitanya Bhagavat 1.10)

When Mahaprabhu returned from Gaya and began to reveal the amazing transformations of love, all the devotees were astonished. Sriman Pandit was the

first to see Mahaprabhu’s ecstatic symptoms and he reported this news to all the others who were overjoyed. When Mahaprabhu decided to reveal his true identity to the devotees, he told them to come to the house of Shuklambar Brahmachari. Gadadhara went to Shuklambar’s house but was discreet about his presence there, but when he saw Mahaprabhu become intoxicated with the power of the Holy Names and overcome by the sattvikas, he fainted. Mahaprabhu then said to him: “Gadadhara! You have such good fortune. From your early childhood, your mind has been fixed on Krishna’s lotus feet. Meanwhile, I have wasted my life in useless activities. Though I had obtained the great treasure of a human birth, by my misfortune, I made no use of it.” (Chaitanya Bhagavat 2.1)

Whenever Mahaprabhu became too overcome by his ecstasies, Gadadhara would calm him. One day, as Mahaprabhu was crying out in separation, “Where is Krishna? Where is Krishna?” Gadadhara said to him, “Your lord Krishna is hidden in your heart.” As soon as he heard this, Mahaprabhu began to claw at his chest, but luckily Gadadhara was able to stop him by holding his hands and calm him by saying, “Krishna will come shortly, be patient.” When Sachi saw how Gadadhara was clever in handling her son, she asked him to always stay by his side to protect him. (Chaitanya Bhagavat 2.2.198-210)

Gadadhara Takes Initiation from Pundarika

Once, Mahaprabhu was calling out the name of his dear associate, Pundarika Vidyanidhi, saying, “Pundarika, my father!” and crying. None of the devotees present were able to understand what Mahaprabhu meant. When they asked him, he told them about Pundarika Vidyanidhi and explained that he would shortly be coming to Nabadwip Mayapur. When Pundarika did come to Nabadwip, he played the role of a great sense enjoyer in order to dissimulate his greatness. Mukunda Datta was a former resident of Chittagong and knew Pundarika Vidyanidhi, who was formerly Radharani’s father Vrishabhanu, very well. One day, he told Srila Gadadhara Pandit Goswami that he wanted to introduce him to a very advanced Vaishnava and took him to Pundarika’s house. Mukunda introduced the two of them and Vidyanidhi happily engaged Gadadhara in conversation. Gadadhara, however, who had been indifferent to sensual pleasures since he was very young, began to have doubts about Pundarika Vidyanidhi when he saw the expensive furnishings by which he was surrounded, rich sheets as white as the foam of milk, perfumes in the air, the pan he chewed. Mukunda saw the doubt written on Gadadhara’s face and decided to reveal

Pundarika's true devotional nature to him. So he recited a verse in glorification of Krishna from the Bhagavat:

aho bakiyam stana-kala-kutam
jighamsayapayayad apy asadhvi
lebhe gatim dhatry-ucitam tato'nyam
kam va dayalum sharanam prapadye

How truly amazing! The sister of Bakasura, the evil Putana, was sent on a mission to kill Krishna. He drank the kalakuta poison that was mixed with her breast milk, and despite her evil intentions, awarded her the position of a wet nurse (as Ambika Kilimba in Goloka). Who is more merciful than he that I should take shelter of him? (SB 3.2.23)
The instant that Pundarika Vidyanidhi heard this couplet, he began to cry, "Ha Krishna!" and fell to the ground in a faint. Extraordinary ecstatic symptoms began to show on his body. Srila Gadadhara Pandit Goswami was amazed to see this reaction and began to regret the offensive thoughts he had been having just moments before. Later, Mahaprabhu advised Gadadhara that the best way to become free of the offense was to take initiation from Pundarika Vidyanidhi, and so he became his disciple.

The Lord's Constant Companion

Srila Gadadhara Pandit Goswami was Mahaprabhu's constant companion. He participated in Mahaprabhu's water sports after the conversion of Jagai and Madhai, he acted in the play about Krishna lila in Chandrasekhara's house, he observed the great epiphany (maha-prakasha) in Srivasa Angan; he was there when the Kazi was converted and when Mahaprabhu took sannyas; he accompanied Mahaprabhu to Puri where he joined him in cleaning the Gundicha temple, bathing in Narendra Sarovara, etc.
At Chandrasekhara's house, in the first act of the play about Krishna's pastimes in Vrindavan that Mahaprabhu staged, Hari Das played the part of the village constable, Srivasa Pandit played Narada Muni and Mahaprabhu Rukmini. In the second act, Gadadhara also dressed as a woman, at which time Mahaprabhu said, "Gadadhara is a part of my Vaikuntha family." Afterward, Mahaprabhu dressed as the primal energy and gave joy to everyone in the form of the mother of the universe; the devotees too glorified him with hymns addressed to the Divine Mother.

Gadadhara's Kshetra-sannyas

Srila Gadadhara Pandit Goswami went to live in Puri as a kshetra-sannyasi. Mahaprabhu gave him the service of the Tota Gopinath deity and told him to live in the Yamesvara Tota, or garden. On one occasion, when Gadadhara heard that Nityananda had come to Puri, he invited him to come and take Tota Gopinath's prasad. Nityananda accepted his invitation and brought some fine rice from Bengal as an offering for Gopinath. Gadadhara cooked the rice along with leaves and vegetables from the Yamesvara.garden, and when he was offering the foodstuffs to the deity, Mahaprabhu also appeared there, giving him great pleasure. The three of them joyfully took prasad together.
(Chaitanya Bhagavat 3.10)

When Mahaprabhu wanted to go to Vrindavan, Ramananda Raya and Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya used all the means at their disposal to make him stay in Puri. On the third caturmasya after his departure from Nabadwip, all the Bengali devotees came to Puri with their wives to see him. After the Gundicha temple cleansing and the Rathayatra, the devotees returned home. As they were leaving, the devotees from Kulina village asked Mahaprabhu to describe the characteristics of a devotee. Mahaprabhu then described the differences between a Vaishnava, a more advanced Vaishnava and the most advanced Vaishnava.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.16.69-75)

When Mahaprabhu showed even more determination to go to Vrindavan, the devotees finally gave him permission to leave after Vijaya-dashami. King Prataparudra gave a great deal of help to smooth his journey. When he crossed the Citrotpala River, Raya Ramananda, Mardaraja, Harichandana continued on in his company. Srila Gadadhara Pandit Goswami was unable to tolerate the idea of separation from the lord and also wished to remain with him, but Mahaprabhu reminded him of his vow to remain in Jagannath Puri and forbad him to go to Vraja. Gadadhara said to him, "Jagannath Puri is wherever you are. My vows to remain in Puri can go to hell." Mahaprabhu again told him not to abandon his service to Gopinath. Gadadhara answered, "Seeing your lotus feet is worth a million services to Gopinath."

When Mahaprabhu said, "If you abandon your duties to Gopinath, you will be at fault.", Gadadhara answered that he was willing to take that responsibility, but he would not disturb Mahaprabhu by following alongside him, he would go alone to Bengal to see Sachi Mata. Other than Mahaprabhu's intimate associates, no

one is able to understand the extent of Gadadhara Prabhu’s devotion to Gauranga. Love on the path of spontaneous devotion is not easy to comprehend. Gadadhara was ready to abandon his vows, his service, everything for the sake of Mahaprabhu.

When they all arrived at Cuttack, Mahaprabhu called Gadadhara and said, “Your decision to break your vows and leave your service has been made a reality. If you come with me, that will make you happy. But do you want your own happiness or mine? It will make me unhappy if your vows to remain in Puri and to serve Gopinath are broken. If you want my happiness, return to Puri and take up your vows again. That is all I have to say.”

When he heard Mahaprabhu’s words, Gadadhara fell to the ground in a faint. Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya comforted him on Mahaprabhu’s order and then accompanied him back to Puri.

Gadai-Gauranga

Due to her amiable simplicity, Krishna’s wife Rukmini was not always able to understand his joking words and would become frightened. Like her, Gadadhara was also unable to always understand Mahaprabhu’s witticisms or his feigned indifference, all of which would disturb him. Srila Gadadhara Pandit Goswami was by nature simple and affectionate. On one occasion, Vallabha Bhatta came to see Mahaprabhu and the two were engaged in jocular conversation. When Mahaprabhu saw that Vallabha Bhatta was proud of his scholarship, he became somewhat distant from him and started to find flaws in everything that he said.

Vallabha responded to Mahaprabhu’s indifference by starting to visit Gadadhara and making a show of attachment to him. Mahaprabhu did not particularly care for Gadadhara’s relation with Vallabha and began to demonstrate a certain coolness toward him also. This behavior made Gadadhara fear that Mahaprabhu would ostracize him and so he came and fell at his feet and started to cry. Mahaprabhu laughed and embraced Gadadhara. He said,

”I wanted to agitate you, but you did not become agitated. You said nothing in anger, but patiently bore everything. Your mind was not disturbed by my tricks. By remaining fixed in your simple nature, you have purchased me.” No one can describe the character of Gadadhara’s ecstatic love. Thus, Mahaprabhu has been given the name Gadadhara-prananatha, “Gadadhara’s life and soul”. No one can

describe the lord’s mercy toward Gadadhara; thus people sing their names together: Gadai-Gauranga.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.7.157-160)

Srila Gadadhara Pandit Goswami remained on this earth only eleven months after Mahaprabhu’s disappearance. In Bhakti-ratnakara, Narahari Chakravarti has described the terrible suffering of Gadadhara in Mahaprabhu’s separation. He remained alive only in order to be able to see Srinivas Acharya.

Repeating the name of Gaurasundara with his eyes closed, his sighs were as hot as flames. No one but the lord can know how Gadadhara Pandit suffered in the absence of Gauranga. His motionless body remained alive only so that he could bestow his mercy on Srinivas Acharya.
(Bhakti-ratnakara 3.142-4)

Srila Gadadhara Pandit Goswami disappeared at Puri on the dark moon day of Jyestha in 1456 of the Shaka era (1535 AD).

Sri Jagadisa Pandit

apare yajna-patnyau shri-jagadisha-hiranyakau |
ekadashyaà yayor annaà prarthayitva’ghasat prabhuh ||

The wives of the sacrificing Brahmins in Vraja took birth as Jagadisa and Hiranya. The Lord (Mahaprabhu) asked for and ate their prasad on the Ekadasi day.
(Gaura-ganoddesha-dipika 192)

asid vraje chandrahaso nartako rasa-kovidah |
so’yaà nritya-vinodi shri-jagadishakhyah panditah ||

In Vraja there was a dancer named Candrahasa who was very expert in the tasting of rasa. In Chaitanya-lila, he became Jagadisa Pandit who also took great pleasure in dancing for the Lord.
(Gaura-ganoddesha-dipika 143)

Jagadisa Pandit is considered to be simultaneously both Nityananda-shakha and Chaitanya-shakha, a branch both of Chaitanya as well as Nityananda in the desire tree of devotion. He was born in the town of Gauhati (Pragjyotishpur) in modern Assam. His father's name was Kamalaksha Bhatta. Both of his parents were devotees of Vishnu. When they died, he came with his wife Duhkhini and his brother Hiranya to Mayapur on the shores of the Ganga where they built a home near that of Jagannath Mishra. Jagadisa Pandit became Jagannath Mishra's very close friend.

Jagadisa and his wife Duhkhini had the same kind of parental affection for the little Nimai as Jagannath and Sachi themselves. Duhkhini was like a mother to Nimai and even sometimes acted as his wet-nurse. Nimai, the son of Sachi, is none other than the son of Yashoda, the supreme lord Krishna incarnate. It is not possible for anyone but an eternal associate of the Lord to have the good fortune to treat him like a son in this way.

Nimai begs for Jagadisa's offering

Mahaprabhu showed through his pastimes just how dear he considered Jagadisa Pandit to be. Sriman Mahaprabhu is the father of sankirtan and even as a child he tricked everyone into chanting the Holy Names. Sachi and all the other neighbors would clap their hands and sing the names of the Lord in order to make him stop crying. One Ekadasi day, however, Nimai kept on crying despite Sachi Mata and Jagannath Mishra's chanting the Names in the usual way. His parents became confused and anxious, and in desperation asked him, "What do you want, child? What must we give you to make you to stop crying?" Nimai answered, "Today, they have made a rice offering to Vishnu at Jagadisa's house. I want to eat some of that prasad. Give me some of that prasad and I will stop crying."

Jagannath Mishra was amazed to hear Nimai say such things. How could he know that Jagadisa Pandit made a rice offering on Ekadasi? Jagannath Mishra immediately went to his neighbor's house and was surprised to see that a large

offering had indeed been made to their Vishnu deity. Jagannath told Jagadisa of Nimai's request, adding that he was worried that it would not be correct for him to eat rice on Ekadasi day. But Gauranga's eternal associate Jagadisa Pandit knew that it was little Gopal in the form of Nimai who was hungry. Without any hesitation, he gave the entire offering to Jagannath Mishra. As soon as Nimai received the plate, he immediately stopped crying and joyfully started to eat.

Jagadisa Pandit and Hiranya [are Chaitanya's branches of the desire tree of devotion]. The merciful Lord gave them his grace when he was a little boy. He ate the offerings to Vishnu at their house on the Ekadasi day.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 1.10.70-71)

Jagadisa Pandit purifies the entire universe because the nectar of love for Krishna pours from him like torrents of rain.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 1.11.30)

The above mentioned pastime is described in the Chaitanya Bhagavat, Ädi-khanda, chapter 4.

The Lord grabs the things of the devotee even if he doesn't offer them, but he shows no interest whatsoever in the gifts of the non-devotee.

Just as Mahaprabhu was conquered by the devotion of Jagadisa Pandit, so too was his dearest companion Nityananda Prabhu who considered him to be one of his own intimate associates. Nityananda Prabhu was Jagadisa's life and soul. Jagadisa was present in Panihati for the Chira-dadhi Mahotsava.

Jagadisa and Jagannath

Before taking sannyas, Mahaprabhu ordered Jagadisa to go to Nilachala to preach Krishna-bhakti and the religious practice of the age, Harinama-sankirtan. The son of Nanda, Sri Krishna and the son of Jagannath Mishra, Sri Gaurasundara, are the same truth as Jagannath himself. When he arrived in Puri, Jagadisa went for Jagannath's darshan and melted with love when he saw him. When on his way back to Bengal, however, he felt extreme separation from Jagannath. Thousands and thousands of people go on pilgrimage to Puri every single day. All of them take darshan of Jagannath, but how many of them are overcome by feelings of separation when returning home? Perhaps once in a

while some fortunate individual is able to feel such emotions. If one truly feels such pangs of separation, then this is a sign of Jagannath's mercy; if not, then one has not truly received the grace of the Lord.

Jagannath Deva saw Jagadisa crying and so mercifully appeared to him in a dream and told him to take his vigraha and serve it. Simultaneously, he appeared to the king of Orissa and ordered him that at the time of the nava-kalevara, when the wooden deity of Jagannath is changed, the outgoing form should be given to Jagadisa Pandit. Thus, when he met Jagadisa, the Maharaj considered it to be a great honor to give him Jagannath's outgoing form, which is known as the samadhi-stha-vigraha.

Jagadisa prayed to Jagannath, asking him just how he could possibly carry the heavy figure of the deity all the way back to Bengal. Jagannath answered him that he would become as light as a cork; Jagadisa should simple cover him with a new cloth and then carry him with the help of a staff. Jagadisa would have to make permanent arrangements to stay wherever Jagannath was set down on the ground. Jagadisa enlisted the aid of two Brahmins, and they took turns carrying Jagannath as far as the village of Jashora on the banks of the Ganges, near the town of Chakdaha. Jagadisa left Jagannath with one of the Brahmins and went to take his bath in the Ganges. Suddenly, the Brahmin found that Jagannath was becoming very heavy and that he was no longer able to hold him up. Thus when Jagadisa came back from his bath, he saw Jagannath sitting on the ground and realized that the Lord wanted to stay in that very spot.

Chakdaha is a historical site and ancient holy place. During the Puranic age, it was known as Rathavarma. Pradyumna killed the demon Sambara there during Krishna's incarnation at the end of the Dvaparaa age and thus it was known as Pradyumna-nagara. Prior to that, when Bhagiratha was bringing down the Ganga in order to save the Sagara dynasty, he buried the wheel of his chariot here. Thus the town was also given the name Chakradaha, which in time has been transformed into Chakdaha. When the local people heard that the Jagannath deity from Puri had come to stay in Jashora, they flocked there in their thousands to seek his darshan. This is how Jagadisa decided to remain in Jashora rather than return to to his home in Mayapur.

Both Nityananda Prabhu and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu visited the Jagannath temple in Jashora on two occasions, being attracted by Jagadisa Pandit and his wife's parental devotion. They held sankirtan and a feast both times. As the Lord

was about to leave Jashora to go to Puri, Duhkhini began to cry from the imminent separation so intensely that the Lord agreed to remain behind in the form of the Gaura-Gopal deity. In the course of the couple's householder life, they had a son named Ramabhadra Goswami.

The Jashora temple after Jagadisa Pandit

At first, the deity was kept under a bata tree near the Ganges, and later the king of Krishnanagara, Krishnachandra, had a temple built there for him. Jagadisa Pandit's temple is currently being managed by the Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math.

"The very same Jagannath deity and Gaura Gopal who were worshiped by Nityananda Prabhu's dear associate, Jagadisa Pandit, have displayed the wonderful pastime of voluntarily offering themselves to the great devotee, Tridandi Swami Srimad Bhakti Dayita Madhava Maharaj, in order to accept his service."

Sri Kalki Avatara

The last avatara among the Dasavatara is Lord Sri Kalki. It is also written that the twenty-fifth and final lila-avatara is Lord Kalki. Generally, these twenty-five avataras appear in every kalpa. That is why they are also known as kalpa-avataras. In his Dasavatara-stotra, Srila Jayadeva Gosvami prays to Lord Kalki in this way:

mleccha-nivaha-nidhane kalayasi karavalam
dhumaketum iva kim api karalam
kesava dhrita-kalki-sarira jaya jagadisa hare
(Sri Jayadeva's Dasavatara-stotra, 10th Verse)

"Lord Kesava assumes the comet-like form of Kalki with a terrible sword to

annihilate the wicked barbarians. O Lord of the universe! O Lord Hari! O Lord in the form of Kalki, all glories unto You!”

Lord Kalki will appear in the home of a religious and highly gentle brahmana, Sri Vishnu Yasa, in a village named Sambhala[1]. The Lord of the universe, Kalkideva, will possess all eight mystic perfections or siddhis such as anima (the ability to become atomically small) and others, as well as an unequalled luster. He will ride on a fast-moving steed and suppress the wicked. The swift horse on which He will ride to suppress the doers of evil will be named Devadatta. While riding on Devadatta, Kalkideva will travel all over the world at great speed, and with His sword He will annihilate countless disguised plunderers and mlecchas who are a burden to the earth. After this, the hearts of all people will become sanctified by the touch of the air carrying the fragrance of sandalwood and other sacred cosmetics decorating Kalkideva. Again, by the desire of Lord Vasudeva, a large number of progeny will take birth. By the appearance of Supreme Lord Kalki, people endowed with the quality of goodness will take birth at the beginning of Satya-yuga.

yada yada hi dharmasya glanir bhavati bharata
abhyutthanam adharmasya tadatmanam srijamy aham
paritranaya sadhunam vinasaya ca dushkritam
dharma-samsthapanarthaya sambhavami yuge yuge
(Bhagavad-gita 4.7-8)

“Whenever there is a decline of dharma (righteousness) and a prevalence of adharma (unrighteousness), the Supreme Lord appears, millennium after millennium, to deliver the pious and annihilate the dishonest, as well as to re-establish dharma.”

In Kali-yuga, when there is a terrible and extensive rise of irreligion leading to an ever-increasing defilement of society, the demigods will take shelter of Lord Vishnu. Understanding the desires of the demigods, the Lord will perform the pastime of appearing in the previously described village of Sambhala and will accept Vishnu Yasa and his wife Sumati as His parents. He will appear on the 12th day of the waxing moon in the month of Vaisakha (April-May). Reaching adulthood, He will annihilate all the mlecchas of the dwelling place of Buddhists, as well as Kuthodevi, the wife of the Rakshasas of Kalkanja, and all other mlecchas. He will even destroy Kali and re-establish dharma.

It has also been said that Lord Kalki will obtain the Vedic knowledge from Parasurama and the military science from Lord Siva. The horse on which He will ride while destroying the wicked will be white in colour. In the 1st Canto of Srimad-Bhagavatam, He has been described as the twenty-second avatara.

athasau yuga-sandhyayam dasyu-prayeshu rajasu
janita vishnu-yasaso namna kalkir jagat-patih
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.3.25)

“Thereafter, at the conjunction of the two yugas, when the rulers of the earth have degenerated into plunderers, the Lord of the creation, Jagannatha-Vishnu, will appear as the son of Vishnu Yasa and be renowned by the name ‘Kalki’.”

Supreme Lord Kalkideva saves the living beings from the evil influence of Kali-yuga and re-establishes them in dharma. Such is described in the 6th Canto of Srimad-Bhagavatam:

dvaipayano bhagavan aprabodhad buddhas tu pashanda-gana-pramadat
kalkih kaleh kala-malat prapatu dharmavanayoru-kritavatarah
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 6.8.19)

“May Supreme Lord Vyasadeva protect me from all kinds of ignorance. May Lord Buddha protect me from activities opposed to the Vedic principles as well as laziness leading to bewilderment and forgetfulness of the Vedic principles of knowledge and ritualistic actions. May Kalkideva, who is considered the supreme descent of Godhead to protect righteousness, protect me from the dirt of the age of Kali.”

Srila Narahari Thakura has written in his ‘Bhakti-ratnakara’ that those who call themselves God are the disciples of Kali. Their punisher is Lord Kalkideva:

se papishtha apanara bolaya ‘gopala’
ataeva tare sabe bolaye ‘siyala’keha kahe - maha amangala e sabara
e saba mlecchera sasta kalki avatara
(Bhakti-ratnakara 14.175-176)

“He who declares himself to be God is extremely sinful. All call him a jackal or a cheat. Such dreadful ominous barbarians will be punished by Kalki-avatara.”

Sri Krishna Dvaipayana Vedavyasa Muni describes the holy biography and glories of Kalkideva in detail in his Kalki Purana:

sambhale vishnu yasaso
grihe pradurbhavabamyaham
sumatyam matari vibho
kanyayam tvannidesatah
caturbhir bhratribhirdeva
karishyami kali-kshayam
bhavanto bandhava devah
svamsenavatarishyatha
(Kalki Purana 2.4-5)

"Sri Hari said to the lotus-born Brahma, 'At your request, I shall take birth on the earth in the home of the brahmana, Vishnu Yasa, from the womb of his wife, Sumati. I shall destroy Kali with My four brothers. O demigods! You should also take birth on your behalf and establish friendly relations with Me for the benefit of the inhabitants of heaven.' "

Kamala Devi (Padma), the beloved of Lord Kalki, will appear from the womb of Kaumudi, the wife of Brihadratha, the king of Simhala. Kalkideva will be four-armed at first, but will later assume a two-armed form at the request of Brahma. Rama, Parasurama, Kripa, Vyasa and Asvatthama will assume the forms of mendicants (bhikshu-deha) to see Kalkideva. Lord Kalki, riding on His horse with sword in hand, will appear in the city of Bhallata with His army. There will be a great battle with the powerful glorious King Sasidhvaja, who will be a devotee of Lord Krishna. Susanta, the wife of Sasidhvaja, will also be a devotee of Lord Hari. In this terrible battle between Kalki and Sasidhvaja, a large number of infantry, cavalry and elephantry will be destroyed. After offering prayers to Kalki, when the devotee Sasidhvaja attacks Supreme Lord Kalki according to the regulations of war, Lord Kalki will faint. Pretending to have fainted, Lord Kalkideva will come with Sasidhvaja to his palace. There, He will accept the worship of Sasidhvaja and his devoted wife, Susanta. At that time, Dharma and Krita-yuga (Satya-yuga) will also arrive there. Due to the repeated and lengthy prayers of Susanta, Lord Kalki will be pleased. He will give up His swoon and stand up like a warrior. At that time, Susanta will be at His front, Krita-yuga at His left side, Dharma at His right side and the great devotee king, Sasidhvaja, at his back.
King Sasidhvaja will call his sons and according to the desire of his wife, he will

surrender his daughter Rama to the lotus feet of Lord Kalkideva. Kalki Purana describes how King Sasidhvaja became a devotee.

Sasidhvaja and his wife had formerly been born as foul smelling flesh-eating eagles. A hunter had trapped them in a net and brought them to the bank of the River Ganga. There he pulverised their heads by striking them on a black stone found in the river Gandaki (which are representations of Vishnu called salagrama sila) and killed them. Since they had departed from their bodies on a holy salagrama-sila marked with a cakra on the bank of the Ganga, they assumed four-armed forms and went to Vaikuntha-dhama. After living there for one hundred yugas they came to the abode of Brahma, where they lived for five hundred yugas and then lived four hundred years in paradise. After this, they attained human births as devotees of Lord Hari.

A detailed description of Kalkideva along with the gist of subjects and incidents has been described in Kalki Purana as follows:

The conversation between Suka and Markandeya Muni; a description of the Adharma dynasty; a description of Kali; the journey of the earth in the form of a cow along with the demigods to the abode of Brahma; the birth of Hari in the home of Vishnu Yasa according to the promise of Brahma; the birth of four brothers as partial manifestations of Sri Hari from the womb of Sumati in Sambhala village; the conversation between father and son; Kalki accepts the sacred thread; the father and son live together; Kalki learns the Vedas and military science; the meeting with Lord Siva; Kalki prays to, and receives boons from Lord Siva; Kalki obtains the company of Sukadeva; Kalki returns to Sambhala village and describes the boons of Lord Siva to His relatives; at the request of King Visakhayupa, Kalki describes His own form; the glories of the brahmanas; the arrival of Suka; the conversation between Kalki and Suka; Suka describes Simhala; by the boon of Hara-Mahadeva, the kings become women just by seeing Padma at her svayamvara; Padma's sorrow; Kalki's attempt at marriage; Suka is motivated to be a messenger; the mutual introduction of Suka with Padma; the method of worship of Hari; meditation on Lord Hari from His feet to His face; Padma gives her ornaments to Suka; Suka again meets with Kalki; Kalki sets off to marry Padma; the meeting with Padma by the deception of water-sports and then marriage; the kings regain their masculinity just by seeing Kalki; the arrival of Ananta; Ananta's discussion with the kings in the assembly; a description of Ananta's birth as a eunuch; prayers to Lord Siva; Ananta's father passes away seeing maya in Vishnu-kshetra; the biography of

Ananta; Ananta’s knowledge, renunciation and so on; the departure of the kings; Kalki goes to Sambhala with Padma; Visvakarma builds a city in Sambhala; Kalki, together with Padma, His relatives and His armies, resides in the house built by Visvakarma; suppression of the Buddhists; the Buddhist women travel to the battlefield; the presence of the sages named Balakhilya; self-dedication; the killing of the Rakshasi Kuthodevi along with her sons; the sages meet with Kalki in Haridvara; a description of the lunar and solar dynasties; the holy life of Lord Rama; the meeting with Maru and Devapi who had come for battle; the killing of the violent Kokavikoka; Kalki goes to Bhallata city; the battle with Sayakarna and others; Kalki’s battle with King Sasidhvaja; the devotion of Susanta; Kalki brings Dharma and Krita-yuga from the battlefield; Susanta prays to Kalki; Kalki’s marriage to Rama; a description of Sasidhvaja’s previous life in the assembly; the reason for his becoming old; Sasidhvaja obtains liberation from Kalki; deliverance of the visha-kanya; coronation of the kings; prayers by maya; various sacrifices in Sambhala village; Vishnu Yasa is liberated by Narada; the nature of Krita-yuga and dharma; the vow undertaken by Rukmini; Kalki’s wanderings; the birth of Kalki’s sons and grandsons; the presence of demigods and Gandharvas in Sambhala village and after this, the departure of Kalki to Vaikuntha.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Sambhala: Its present name is Sambhalapura. According to the encyclopedia, this place is in Gontuvana region. Alternately, it is considered to be in Muradabad. It is said in Kalki Purana that there are sixty places of pilgrimage in this area. To remove the ill effects of Kali, the Supreme Lord will appear here as Kalki and reside here for thousands of years with His entourage.
---From "Dasavatara - The Ten Manifestations of God" by Swami B.B. Tirtha.

Sri Kurma Avatar

The second avatara of the Lord among the Dasavatara is Kurma-avatara, the tortoise avatara.

tatrapi devasambhutyam vairäjasyabhavat sutah
ajito nama bhagavan amsena jagatah patih
payodhim yena nirmathya suranam sadhita sudha
bhramamano ’mbhasi dhrtah Kurma-rupena mandarah
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 8.5.9 -10)

In the sixth manvantara, a manifested form of Lord Visnu named Ajita appeared as the son of Vairäja from the womb of Devasambhüti. Lord Ajita caused the churning of the Ocean of Milk and produced nectar for the demigods. In the form of a tortoise, He held the great mountain known as Mandara on His back in the ocean.

The following is a brief account of Sukadeva Goswami's description, which was spoken to satisfy Parikshit Maharaja’s desire to hear these pastimes in detail.

Once, the great sage Durvasa came across Indra, the king of the devas, riding on his elephant. Durvasa Muni presented Indra with his flower garland, but Indra, who was proud of his opulence, did not pay attention to the garland and threw it on the head of his elephant named Airavata. The garland fell from the elephant and was crushed under its foot. Seeing this insult of the garland he had given, Durvasa Muni became enraged and cursed Indra by swearing, “Be bereft of all prosperity!” Thus, Indra and the other demigods lost all their strength and prosperity. After some time, the demigods were defeated in a war with the demons and many of them lost their lives. Most of the demigods were unable to regain their lives even though the Vedic sages were invested with mystic powers and the knowledge of mantras and techniques to bring the dead back to life under certain conditions. Therefore, the demigods held a meeting, but as they were unable to find any means of retaliation, they approached Brahma at Sumeru Mountain and informed him about their miserable state. Upon seeing the weak state of the demigods and the powerful state of the demons, Brahma meditated on the Supreme Lord with full concentration. Thereafter, he joyfully spoke to the demigods: “Only by exclusive devotion to the lotus feet of Supreme Lord Sri Hari can you be saved from this dangerous situation.” Along with other demigods Brahma then went to Svetadvipa, which is situated in the Ocean of Milk, and offered many Vedic prayers to the Supreme Lord Visnu. Satisfied by the prayers of the demigods, Ksirodakshaya Visnu appeared, but due to His dazzling effulgence, none of the demigods other than Brahma were able to see Him. Then, Lord Brahma with Lord Mahesvara again offered prayers. Satisfied

by the prayers of Brahma and the other demigods, Lord Ajita suggested that the demigods should skillfully make a truce with the demons-the disciples of Sukracarya. The Lord told them to use Mandara Mountain as a churning rod and the serpent Vasuki as a rope for the production of the nectar of immortality by churning the Ocean of Milk together with the demons. Lord Ajita also told the demigods that upon churning the ocean they should not be afraid of generating the poison known as kalakuta. He also told them that they should not be greedy for whatever different attractive products would be obtained from the churning, and if someone else were to take them, they should neither object nor show anger.

The Lord then disappeared after giving these instructions. The demigods went to make a truce with the demon-king, Bali Maharaja. Thereafter, the demons and the demigods set out to get Mandara Mountain. With great endeavour they lifted the mountain, but since it was extremely heavy, it toppled over while they were carrying it. Many of the demigods and demons were crushed under the mountain and died. Seeing their distressed condition and feeling compassion for them, Lord Ajita, riding on His carrier Garuda, made His most auspicious appearance and revived them by bestowing his nectarean glance. Thereafter, the Lord picked up Mandara Mountain effortlessly in His hand and mounted Garuda. Instructed by the Lord, Garuda arrived at the Ocean of Milk along with the demigods and demons, and left after placing Mandara Mountain near the ocean.

The decision to churn the ocean was made on the condition that whatever nectar would be produced in the churning would be shared by both the demigods and the demons. First of all, the serpent Vasuki was wrapped around Mandara Mountain as a rope. Due to the expertise of Lord Hari, the intoxicated demons took hold of the hooded end of Vasuki and the demigods grasped the tail end. With great endeavour, the task of churning began, but after some time the supportless mountain sank into the ocean. All the efforts of the demigods and demons had gone in vain. The Lord saw the sad and frustrated condition of all. On seeing such an obstruction to the churning process, the supremely powerful Lord Ajita assumed the wonderful form of a tortoise (Kurma) and lifted up Mandara Mountain after entering the ocean. Upon seeing Mandara Mountain being raised up, the demigods and demons began the churning again.

Supreme Lord Sri Hari held the great mountain on His back, which was like a subcontinent one hundred thousand yojanas wide. While holding up the great mountain that was being rotated by the demigods and demons, the supremely

powerful Lord Kurma felt a pleasurable itching sensation on His back. Thereafter, to increase the enthusiasm of the devas and asuras, the Lord Himself entered into them as their power, and into the great serpent Vasuki as sleep. The Lord also manifested Himself on the peak of the mountain, spreading thousands of hands like a king of the mountain, holding the mountain with only one hand. As this was taking place, Brahma, Rudra, Indra and the other demigods praised Him and flowers showered down from the heavens.

In the First Canto of Srimad-Bhagavatam, Matsya-avatara is mentioned as the tenth avatara and Kurma as the eleventh:

surasuranam udadhim mathnatam mandaracalam
dadhre kamatha-rupena prstha ekadase vibhuh
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.3.16)

"As the eleventh avatara, Lord Visnu in the form of a tortoise held Mandara Mountain on His back for the demigods and demons who were engaged in churning the ocean."

prstha bhramyad amanda-mandara-giri-gavagra-kanduyanan
nidraloh kamathanater bhagavatah svasanilah pantu vah
yat-samskara-kalamuvartana-vasad vela-nibhenambhasam
yatayatam atandritam jala-nidher nadyapi visramyati
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 12.13.2)

"May you all be protected by the winds caused by Lord Kurma's breathing in His sleepy condition, which was due to the pleasure derived from the scratching of His back by the sharp-edged stones lying on massive whirling Mandara Mountain. Those inhalations and exhalations are still present in the form of ocean tides that never cease."

Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Goswami Prabhupada has written in his explanation of this verse:

"Very high waves are continuously striking against the shores of the ocean of birth, death and the threefold afflictions with great force. There is no cessation of the strokes and counter strokes of the tides. May that Supreme Lord, whose air of inhalation and exhalation creates these powerful strokes and counter strokes of tides, protect the readers. The Vedic scriptures provide the realisation of Truth

in the hearts of the living beings through the breath of the Supreme Lord Kurma, and thereby remove their ignorance.

“The breathing of the Supreme Lord’s descent as Kurmadeva in the sleepy condition represents the sense gratification (bhoga) and sense detachment (tyaga) of the living beings. But if the breath of that Adhoksaja Supreme Lord Kurma bestows mercy, then that breath protects the conditioned souls from sense gratification or sense detachment. May that Supreme Lord Kurma protect fortunate souls from the grip of non-spiritual cognition with the continuous effect of His eternal spiritual breath. The transcendental itching sensation caused by the scratching of the pieces of stones of Mandara Mountain on the back of Lord Kurmadeva made Him sleepy. This bliss of His sleepiness frees the conditioned souls from fear and anxiety. Conditioned souls who consider God to be of stony character are far away from the realisation of God’s relationship of worshipped and worshipper (visaya and äsraya). May this breathing of the Supreme Personality of Godhead act to pacify the itching sensation of argument within the minds of the conditioned souls. May the appearance of Lord Kurma and the efficacy of His pastimes blow within the hearts of the conditioned souls like a favourable breeze, and alleviate the itching of their tendency for material enjoyments.”

puramrtartham daiteya-danavaih saha devatah
manthanam mandaram krtvä mamantam kstra sagaram
mathyamane tada tasmim Kurmarapi janardanah
vyabhara mandaram devo devanam hitakamyaya
deväsca tustuvurdevam naradadya maharsayah
Kurmarupadharam drtsva saksinam visnumavyayam
(Kurma Purana, Purva 11.27.29)

“In the past, the demigods and the demons churned the Ocean of Milk using Mandara Mountain as a churning rod to obtain the nectar of immortality. At that time, Lord Janardana in the form of a tortoise, desiring the welfare of the demigods, held Mandara Mountain on His back. Upon seeing the imperishable Lord Visnu Himself in His avatara as a tortoise, the demigods, Narada and other sages became very satisfied.”

The description of the Lord’s appearance as Kurmadeva in the Eighth Canto of Srimad-Bhagavatam is the same as was previously discussed. There is an important point to be learned here: whenever the demigods and demons become

proud, the Lord destroys their pride. Even after their pride has been destroyed, they become proud again and again. In this way, the intelligence of living beings that are illusioned by the maya of Lord Visnu becomes bewildered. Ultimately, the Lord entered into the demigods and demons to give them strength to perform the task of churning the ocean. Therefore, the false pride that “I am the doer” is the cause of great ignorance. This mentality should be given up completely.

Ksitir iha vipulatare tisthati tava prsthe
dharani-dharana-kina-cakra-garisthe
kesava dhrta-Kurma-sarira jaya jagadisa hare
(Sri Jayadeva’s Dasavatara-stotra, 2nd Verse)

“O Kesava! Due to holding up the world, a large round sore-like mark has been made in the wide expanse of Your back. O Lord of the universe! O Lord Hari, who have assumed the form of a tortoise! All glories unto You!”

Here, Sri Jayadeva has used the words ksiti and dharani for Mandara Mountain. The earth holds the living entities, and Lord Kurma holds the earth. While worshipping the Supreme Lord, one chants the following mantra of worship for Lord Kurma before sitting on the asana (a sacred flat seat on the ground for worship):

(om) asana-mantrasya, meru-prstha rsih, sutalam chandah
kurmo devata, asanabhimantrena viniyogah
prthvi tvaya dhrtä loka devi tvam visnuna dhrta
tvam ca dharaya mäm nityam pavitram asanam kuru
(Hari-bhakti-vilasa 5.21-22)

“For the asana-mantra, the rsi(sage) is Meru-prstha, the chandah (meter) is Sutala and the Presiding Deity is Kurma. ‘O Goddess Earth! You are supporting all living beings. O Devi, you are being supported by Lord Visnu. Therefore, please support me always and purify this asana.’ ”

Sri Lochana Das Thakur

Locana Das Thakur was born in 1523 in Kograma, in the Katwa block of Burdwan district. This village is about ten miles north of Guskara train station. The Thakur's home is situated near the Ajaya River.

His birth tithi is given by some as the first day of the fortnight of the waxing moon in Paush. He was born in the Raåhéya clan of the physician caste (vaidya). His father's name was Kamalakara Das, his mother's Sadanandé. Locana Das studied at his maternal grandfather's house. He displayed devotion for Mahaprabhu from his childhood.

Locana Das was married at a very young age, according to the customs of that epoque. His in-laws' household was in the village of Amedpura Kakuöa. However, though he had entered the married station, he was extremely renounced and spent all his time discussing Krishna-katha with other devotees of Gauranga.

Since Locana Das was married at a very early age, his wife at first remained with her parents, but as the time approached when she was to join him, they began to worry because of Locana Das's indifference to material life. They approached his guru Narahari Sarkara and told him of their disquiet. As a result, Narahari ordered Locana Das to go to his in-laws' home.

When Locana arrived in their village he was unable to remember where their house was, since it had been so long since he had visited. He asked a young girl in the street for directions, addressing her as "Ma", or "mother". When he arrived at his in-laws' house, he learned that the girl whom he had addressed as his mother was in fact his wife. From that day on, he always looked upon his wife as a mother, worshiping Guru and Gauranga in an attitude of renunciation.

The Chaitanya Mangala

Narahari Sarakara Thakur, Mahaprabhu's famous associate from Çrékhaëòa, was very affectionate to Locana Das and gave him initiation. Locana Das enthusiastically took up residence with his guru in Çrékhaëòa. His guru taught him the art of kirtan and later ordered him to write Mahaprabhu's sacred biography. Locana Das took this order seriously and wrote the Chaitanya

Mangala, the events of which are based on Murari Gupta's Chaitanya-carita.

The word mangala means auspicious and this title reflects the fact that hearing Mahaprabhu Sri Chaitanya's divine pastimes is the most auspicious activity for all the living beings. Vrindavan Das Thakur's biography of the Lord was first named Chaitanya Mangala and was only later known as Chaitanya Bhagavat. Locana Das gives an indication of this in the introductory portion of his book:

I attentively pay my obeisances to Vrindavan Das Thakur; his Bhagavat's songs have enchanted the entire universe. (CM Sütrakhaëda, 1.35)

Some people believe that Locana Das and Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami gave the name Chaitanya Bhagavat to Vrindavan Das's book. In the Chaitanya Mangala, Locana Das prays for his guru's blessings as follows:

Narahari Das Thakur is the proprietor of my life, and out of the hope of attaining his lotus feet, I desire to sing the glories of Gauranga, even though I am the lowest of the low. This is my ambition. (CM Sütrakhaëòa, 1.9)

I offer my reverences to Narahari Das, the ocean of Gauranga's qualities. Other than him, I have no friend in the three worlds. (Ibid., 1.33)

My lord and master is Narahari Das. I prostrate myself in humility to him. May he fulfill my desires. (Ibid., 1.61)

Locana Das wrote the Chaitanya Mangala in Eastern Bengal's Païcalé style, completing it in in 1537 AD. There is a legend that he wrote the book while sitting on a stone under a flower tree. In his new Bengali dictionary, Ashutosh Deb has underlined Locana Das's contribution by stating that he was the first to write Bengali poetry using moric metres as well as being one of the first historical writers in Bengali. The original manuscript of the Chaitanya Mangala is said to be found in the personal library of Praëakåsëa Chakravarti of Kandaåa near the the Guskara train station.

Other titles attributed to Locana Dâsa are Prarthana, Durlabha-sara, Dhamalé, and Bengali verse translations of Ramananda's Jagannath-vallabha-naöaka and the Rasa-païcadhyaya.

According to the Bhakti-ratnakara, Locana Das was present at Narahari Sarakara

Thakur's disappearance festival and greeted guests by giving them sandalwood and garlands.

Locana Das's songs glorifying Nityananda

In the Chaitanya Mangala, Locana Das describes his guru Narahari as being Mahaprabhu's dearest associate. He does not describe Nityananda's glories as extensively. Fearful that the neglect of Nityananda might be taken as offensive to his feet, he later wrote a few songs in his praise. These songs are particularly well appreciated by the devotees.

nitai gunamani amara nitai gunamani
aniya premera banya bhasala abani

premera banya laiya nitai aila gauda-deze
dubila bhakata-gana dina hina bhase

dina-hina-patita-pamara nahi bache
brahmara durlabha prema sabakare jace

abaddha karuna-sindhu (nitai) katiya muhana
ghare ghare bule prema amiyara bana

locana bole mora nitai jeba na bhajila
janiya zuniya sei atma-ghati haila

Nitai is the jewel of virtue, my Nitai is the jewel of virtue. He brought the deluge of love of God and flooded the world.

He brought the deluge of love of God to Gauòadeça, flooding the devotees. The lowly and deprived are also floating.

He excluded not the lowly and deprived, nor the sinful and atheistic, but insisted that everyone take the gift of love which is beyond the reach of even Brahma.

Nitai cut the floodgates which held back the ocean of compassion, and went from door to door to give the nectar of love to everyone.

Locana Das says that anyone who has not worshiped my Nitai has committed suicide in full knowledge.

akrodha paramananda nityananda ray
abhimana sunya nitai nagare beday
adhama patita jiver dvare dvare giya
hari nama maha -mantra deno bilaiya
jare dekhe tare kohe dante trna dhori '
amare kiniya loho bhajo gaura-hari
eto boli 'nityananda bhume gadi jay
sonara parvata jeno dhulate lotay
heno avatare jar rati na janmilo
locan bole seri papi elo ar gelo

Lord Nityananda is free from anger and the embodiment of supreme joy. He wanders throughout the town without any pride or arrogance.

He knocks on every fallen person's door and bestows the maha-mantra of the Holy Names on him.

Placing straw between his teeth, he says to everyone he sees, "Worship Gaura Hari and you will purchase me and make me your slave."

Then he falls to the ground, looking like a golden mountain rolling in the dust.

Whoever lacks faith in such a compassionate incarnation is a sinner who will go as he has come, says Locana Das.

parama karuna pahun dui jana
nitai gaurachandra
saba avatara, sara shiromani
kevala ananda kanda
bhaja bhaja bhai, chaitanya nitai
sudhrida visvasa kori
vishaya chariya se rase majiya
mukha bolo hari hari
dekho ore bhai, tribhuvane nai
emona doyala data
pashu-pakhi jhure, pashana vidore

shuni yar guna gantha
samsare majiya, rahile pariya
se pade nahilo asha
apana koroma, bhunjaye shamana,
kohoye locana dasa

Nitai and Gauracandra, are the two most compassionate lords. They are the essence of all incarnations, the crest-jewels of the avatars, the source of the unique joy of prema.

O brother! I implore you to worship Gaura-Nitai with firm faith. Give up your attachment to sense gratification and merge into this nectar by chanting the names of Hari.

Look, O brother! There is no benefactor in the three worlds who is as merciful as they. Even birds and animals are fulfilled by hearing their qualities, and stones melt.

Absorbed in the cycle of birth and death, you have fallen by the wayside without any hope for achieving their company. The lord of death will come and make you suffer the results of your activities - so sings Locana Das.

Gaura-nagara doctrine condemned

Followers of certain heterodox groups or apasampradayas say that the Gaura-nagara doctrine is found in the Chaitanya Mangala. This is not true, however. Vrindavan Das Thakur writes in his Chaitanya Bhagavat: gauranga nagara hena stava nahi bale -- "No one should praise the Lord by calling him the golden playboy." Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur comments: "Gaurasundara is Krishna who has been endowed with Radha's bodily hue and her mood of love. Thus he never abandoned the qualities of the heart of Radha and the other gopis, i.e., the character of the açraya of devotion in the erotic mood. This means that he never acts like the visaya ('object') or bhokta ('enjoyer') of madhura-rasa by looking at other women in the spirit of a playboy."

Locana Das ended his pastimes in this world in 1589 AD. A brick samadhi at his çrépaöa marks the place where his remains are buried.

Sri Lokanatha Goswami

lokanathakhya-gosvami
shri-lila-manjari pura
Lokanatha Goswami was known as Lila Manjari in Krishna lila.
(Gaura-ganoddesha-dipika 187)

Lokanatha is considered to be Mahaprabhu's direct disciple and associate. Prior to coming to Nabadwip, he lived in the village of Talakharii in Jessore district in what is now Bangla Desh. Prior to that, he lived in Kacna Paria. His father's name was Padmanabha Chakravarti and his mother Sita Devi. The Bhakti-ratnakara quotes an old verse which confirms this:

shrimad-radha-vinodaika-seva-sampat-samanvitam
padmanabhatmajam shrimal-lokanatha-prabhum bhaje

I worship Lokanatha Prabhu, the son of Padmanabha, whose life revolved around the wealth of service he possessed in his deity Radhavinoda.
(Bhakti-ratnakara 1.297)

Srila Lokanatha Goswami and Srila Bhugarbha Goswami

The descendants of Lokanatha's brother, Pragalbha Bhattacharya are still living in Talakharii. Bhugarbha Goswami was Lokanatha's closest friend and constant companion. He was Prema Manjari in Vraja (Gaura-ganoddesha-dipika 187).
bhugarbha-thakkurasyasit purvakhya prema-manjari.

According to the Sadhana-dipika, Bhugarbha was Lokanatha's paternal uncle. The Shakha-nirnayamrita adds the following comments on Bhugarbha Goswami:

gosvaminam ca bhugarbham bhugarbhottham suvishrutam

sada mahashayam vande krishna-prema-pradam prabhum
shrila-govinda-devasya seva-sukha-vilasinam
dayalum premadam svaccham nityam ananda-vigraham

I offer my reverence to the illustrious Bhugarbha Prabhu, who is said to have been born from the bowels of the earth. He bestows love of Krishna; he takes pleasure in the service of Govinda Deva, is compassionate, simple and always joyful.

Bhugarbha Goswami's initiating guru was Gadadhara Pandit Goswami. He is therefore considered to be Gadadhara's branch. Sri Bhagavata Das, a fellow disciple of Srila Gadadhara Pandit Goswami, was also a close friend.

Bhugarbha and Bhagavata Das are branches of Gadadhara Pandit, both of whom went to live in Vrindavan. (Chaitanya Charitamrita Adi, 12.81)

Lokanatha and Bhugarbha go to Vraja

Lokanatha Goswami renounced the householder ashrama in 1431 of the Shaka era (1510) and came to meet Mahaprabhu in Nabadwip. Mahaprabhu immediately told him to go and live in Vrindavan, telling him that it was his own intention to take sannyas very shortly and go there himself. Lokanatha started to cry when he imagined the Lord with his beautiful curls shorn and the distress the devotees would feel at his departure. When the Lord saw Lokanatha's anxiety, he embraced him and consoled him with various spiritual instructions and Lokanatha surrendered completely to him. When Bhugarbha saw how unhappy Lokanatha was, he decided to accompany him to Vrindavan. The two companions walked through Rajmahal, Tajpur, Purniya, Lukhnow and many holy places before finally arriving in Braj. Though he had come to Vrindavan on Mahaprabhu's order, he constantly felt intense separation from the Lord, shedding copious tears in his desire to see him again. When he got the news that Mahaprabhu had taken sannyas and then gone to Puri and thence to the South on pilgrimage, Lokanatha hurried to Southern India in order to join him. When he arrived in the South, he heard that Mahaprabhu was no longer there, but had gone to Vrindavan. Lokanatha immediately set off for Vrindavan, hoping to see the Lord there, but by the time he arrived, he heard that the Lord was now in Prayag. Lokanatha was disappointed, but still determined to see the Lord and decided to set off again for Prayag. This time, however, Mahaprabhu appeared to him in a dream and told him to stop running around and remain in Vrindavan

and do his bhajana. Not long afterwards, Rupa, Sanatan, Gopal Bhatta Goswamis and others of the Lord’s associates started coming to live in Braj. Their association cheered him immensely.

When Rupa was getting old and unable to walk all the way to Govardhana, he missed being able to see Gopal. When this desire became strong, Gopal came to stay at the house of Vitthaleshvara in Mathura, ostensibly out of fear of Muslim iconoclasts, but actually to show mercy to Rupa Goswami. The deity stayed there for a month, during which time Rupa came for his darshan with Lokanatha and other Gaudiya Vaishnavas.

The extent to which Bhugarbha Goswami was dear to Lokanatha is described in Bhakti-ratnakara:

Lokanatha’s affection for Bhugarbha was well known everywhere. They only had different bodies, in spirit they were one. (Bhakti-ratnakara 1.317)

Gopal Bhatta Goswami was extremely compassionate. Bhugarbha and Lokanatha are a goldmine of virtues. (Bhakti-ratnakara 6.510)

Lokanatha Goswami worshiped Radha and Krishna in a state of separation, increasing the intensity of his renunciation. He was afraid of the slightest amount of fame. Thus he forbad Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami to write anything about him in the Chaitanya Charitamrita, with the result that only his name can be found mentioned there. Sanatan Goswami has also mentioned his name in the mangalacarana to the Hari-bhakti-vilasa, as well as in that to the Vaishnava-toshani commentary to the tenth canto of the Srimad Bhagavatam.

vrindavana-priyan vande shri-govinda-padashritan
shrimat-kashishvaram lokanatham shri-krishnadasakam

I pay obeisance to Kashishvara, Lokanatha and Krishnadas, to whom residence in Vrindavan is very dear and who have taken shelter of Govinda’s lotus feet.

Lokanatha and Radhavinoda

Lokanatha Goswami constantly travelled through Braj, ecstatically visiting the various holy places where Krishna had engaged in his pastimes. Once, he came to Khadiravana. Then he visited Kishori Kund near the village of Umarao by

Chatravana. He was so impressed by the beauty of the site that he stayed there for some time to do his bhajana in isolation. After being engaged in this way for some time, he developed a deep desire to worship Radha and Krishna in the deity form.

The Lord knows the desires of his devotees and feels himself obliged to fulfill them. He came personally to give Lokanatha a deity, telling him that its name was Radhavinoda before disappearing. Lokanatha was astonished to see the deity and then filled with anxiety at the thought that the Lord himself had come and gone. But Radhavinoda cast his sweet glance on Lokanatha and said to him, "I live here on the banks of Kishori Kund in the village of Umarao. I saw your eagerness to serve me and so I came here myself. Who else would have brought me to you? I am very hungry. Quickly prepare something for me to eat."

When he heard these words, tears began to flow from Lokanatha's eyes. He quickly started cooking for Radhavinoda and then made an offering which the deity ate with great satisfaction. He then made him a bed of flowers upon which he placed him, fanned him with branches and joyfully massaged his feet. Lokanatha devoted himself in body, mind and soul to Radhavinoda.

He wondered where he would keep the deity, and decided to make a large bag which became Radhavinoda's temple. He kept his worshipable Lord constantly close to his heart like a necklace. This attracted the people of Braj to Lokanatha and they wanted to built a house for him and his deity, but he refused. He was so renounced that he accepted nothing other than what he absolutely needed for the deity's service. Narottama Das becomes Lokanatha's disciple

After spending some time at Kishori Kund, Lokanatha came to Vrindavan. He learned that Rupa and Sanatan had ended their pastimes in this world and lamented their passing in great sadness. At around this time, Narottama Das, who was the son of the Raja Krishnananda Datta of Gopalpura in Rajsahi (now in Bangla Desh), came to Vrindavan and met him there. When Mahaprabhu told Nityananda to go to Puri, he cried in ecstasy in a place on the banks of the Padmavati river which is now known as Prematila. He buried his love there for Narottama's later benefit.Years later, when Narottama took his bath in the river at that spot, he was immediately overcome with divine love and decided to cut off all family ties and go to Vrindavan.

Upon his arrival in Braj, Narottama met Rupa, Sanatan and Lokanatha. He

received Lokanatha's special mercy, for he became his one and only disciple. Lokanatha was extremely renounced and had made a vow not to take any disciples. Narottama Das too made a vow - to take initiation from no one other than Lokanatha. Narottama repeatedly asked Lokanatha to give him initiation, but Lokanatha was firm in his refusal. In order to win his favor, Narottama went in the middle of the night to clean the place he used as a toilet. Lokanatha was so surprised to see that the place was being kept clean by someone that he became curious to to find out who it was. One evening, he went and hid there, chanting japa the entire night in wait for the anonymous benefactor.

At midnight, he saw someone engaged in cleaning the place and asked him who he was. When he found out that Narottama, the son of a raja, was engaged in doing such a filthy task, he felt embarrassed and asked him what his purpose was in doing it. Narottama immediately began to cry. He fell at Lokanatha's feet and said, "My life is useless unless I obtain your mercy." When Lokanatha saw Narottama's humility and pain, his resolve to never give anyone initiation softened and gave him the mantras.

This is a perfect example of how one can win over the worshipable deity through honest and selfless service. Narottama Das took initiation from Lokanatha on the full moon day of the month of Shravan. Lokanatha and Narottama engaged in this pastime to show the value of selfless and sincere service to the entire world, but especially to the people of northern Bengal. Lokanatha was a very renounced Vaishnava, but he saw in Narottama someone who not only had a cultured background, but an enthusiasm and taste for dealing with people. As a result, he asked him to go back to his homeland to preach Krishna consciousness.

When one has taken full shelter of the Supreme Lord and is situated on the transcendental platform in full service to the Lord, then he usually has no enthusiasm for engaging in activities for the welfare of people on the bodily platform. When a devotee goes against this principle, such activities increase in prestige. On the order of his spiritual master, Narottama returned to northern Bengal and began to preach pure devotional service and thus delivered the people of that country. In his collection of songs known as Prarthana, Narottama Das Thakur has written:

After suffering much sadness, O Lord, you brought me to Braj, pulling me by the rope of mercy which you had tied around my neck. Maya and fate forced me back into the well of material existence by cutting loose that rope of mercy.

Lokanatha Goswami left this world somewhere around 1510 Shaka (1588-9 AD) in the month of Asharh, on the eighth day of the dark moon. His samadhi tomb is found in the Radha Gokulananda temple in Vrindavan. His Radhavinoda deity is also being served in the same temple.

Sri Madhavendra Puripad's Instructions

Ramachandra Puri and Isvara Puri were two of Madhavendra Puri's initiated disciples. However, Ramachandra Puri was unable to receive his spiritual master's mercy because he showed him disrespect, whereas Isvara Puri was blessed through his single-minded devotion to him and was thus able to attain the highest level of pure love for Krishna. Ramachandra Puri was unable to understand the sweetness and supremacy of his gurudeva's feelings of separation and had the audacity to give him advice based on knowledge of Brahman. Madhavendra Puri became so angry that he shunned him completely. Even though he was such a great loving devotee, Madhavendra Puri became angry with his own disciple when he became offensive, chastised him severely, using harsh words. When Ramachandra Puri told him to remember that he was a spiritual being, Madhavendra Puri became extremely angry and said: "Get away from me, you most sinful rascal! I am dying from the distress of not having received Krishna's mercy, of not having attained Mathura, and you come to add to my misery! Go wherever you like, but don't show your face to me again! If I see you while I am dying I will take a lower birth. I am dying from the distress of not having attained Krishna and this lowly fool is teaching me about Brahman."

As a result, Madhavendra Puri withdrew his blessings from his disciple, who then started to develop vasana (The word vasana (material desires) means “the desire for dry knowledge” and from that arose the tendency to criticize the devotees.) He became a dry philosopher without any interest in Krishna. Not

only that but he became critical of everyone, devoting himself to faultfinding. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.8.20-25)

Srila Prabhupada Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakura comments on this incident in his Anubhashya, "Even though Ramachandra Puri saw his own guru suffering of separation from Krishna, he was incapable of recognizing the transcendental nature of his transport of emotions. He judged his guru to be an ordinary man and took his mood to be material, the result of some material insufficiency. As a result he tried to explain to him the value of experiencing the oneness of Brahman. Madhavendra Puri reacted unfavourably to his disciple's stupidity and disregard for his teachings and thus stopped wishing for his well-being. He abandoned him and drove him away."

On the other hand, Ishvara Puri not only adhered to his guru's teaching but served him physically and thus received his mercy. He served the lotus feet of his spiritual master, even to the point of personally cleaning his urine and excrement, as well as helping him to perform shravan of Krishna's name and pastimes. In this way he satisfied him completely.

He continuously repeated the name of Krishna and recounted Krishna's pastimes to him. Madhavendra Puri was so pleased with Ishvara Puri that he embraced him and blessed him, saying, "May you have the wealth of love for Krishna!" From that time onward, Ishvara Puri became an ocean of love for Krishna, while Ramachandra Puri became a mine of insults. These two personalities thus bear witness to the results of pleasing or displeasing a great soul. Madhavendra Puri taught this truth through them.

He was the spiritual master of the whole world and he gave the gift of love of God. He left this world while repeating this verse (from Padyavali):

ayi dinadayardra natha he,
mathuranatha kadavalokyase
hridayam tvad-aloka-kataram
dayita bhramyati kim karomy aham

"O Lord, whose heart softens at seeing the condition of the unfortunate! Oh Lord of Mathura, when will I see you? My heart is filled with pain from not seeing you, my love, and I am confused. What can I do?"
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.8.26-32)

When Mahaprabhu recited this verse he became so intoxicated with love that Nityananda Prabhu had to hold Him to calm Him down.

Prabhupada Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakura writes, "The feeling of separation from Krishna, or transcendental vipralambha is the only practice by which the spirit soul can achieve perfection. Material feelings of separation give rise to a despondency which reveals the attachment that one has for matter, whereas the despondency that results from the feelings of separation for Krishna are the best proof of one's desire to bring pleasure to His senses. The desire to bring pleasure to Krishna's senses shown by Madhavendra Puri, the great soul who is the root of this movement, is the ideal example to follow for anyone who wishes to serve the Lord. It is especially worth remarking that Mahaprabhu and His closest followers later adopted this example and made it their standard."

Excerpt from "Sree Chaitanya and Associates"

Sri Madhvacarya

Madhvacarya was born around 1238 A.D. eight miles south-east of the modern town of Udipi, in the Karnataka State. He is reputed to be the incarnation of Bhima, taking birth in Kali-yuga to destroy the daityas. Others refer to him as Vayu himself and it was his life’s mission to defeat the followers of Sankaracarya.

He was born in the family of very elevated brahmanas and from his early childhood performed many amazing pastimes, such as the killing of a huge serpentine demon named Maniman, simply with the big toe of his left foot.

Madhva was only eight years old when he received spiritual initiation and at the age of twelve he accepted the sannyasa order and began to travel the length and breadth of India.

He enjoyed a long life of robust health. He engaged in various forms of sport and physical exercise in his youth, such as wrestling, swimming and even

mountaineering, which he kept up to the very end. He had very handsome features with a strong muscular frame, tall and strong-limbed with graceful carriage and dignified bearing. Endowed with a magnetic personality and traditional thirty-two laksanas, he had a deep sonorous voice and good musical talent, which he used to advantage in Vedic recitation and in singing the soulful strains of his own devotional compositions and in giving open air discourses on the Bhagavata Purana, with its rolling melody of verses.

His life, as described in the Madhvavijaya, is the narrative of a born leader of men. Madhva recognized the soul of man to be potentially divine; but man, in the ignorance of his true status, has lost his soul to his body and its cravings, and needs to be awakened by God himself or His devotees.

He became a student under Acyutapreksa, who came in the order of Ekanti-Vaisnavas of the Ekadandi order. Madhva entered the sannyasa order and was given the name Purnaprajna.

During his study of the sastras he became convinced about the inherent weakness in the Advaita philosophy and developed a keen desire to revive the theistic science of Vedas with his own thorough reinterpretation of the texts.

After only a short time in his studies, frequent disagreements of views arose between himself and his teacher. Acyutaprajna could see that Purnaprajna was destined to make history for himself and made him head of the Math. On that memorable occasion Purn aprajna was given another name "Anandatirtha" and later adopted the name Madhva.

Madhvacarya spent some time teaching and engaging outstanding scholars belonging to Buddhist, Jain and Advaita Sampradayas, in logical and philosophical discussions and vanquishing them in debates. He set out to propagate his teachings and travelled exte nsively throughout South India. He visited Kanyakumari, Ramesvaram and Srirangam holding discourses on the Brahmasutras and openly criticizing Sankaracarya’s Bhasyas on the Sutras. Giving his own interpretations he soundly defeated all he encountered and naturally roused a good deal of opposition from the leaders of the old schools of thought. At Kanyakumari he met with stiff opposition from an Advaitic monk of great learning who challenged him to write a fresh commentary on the Brahmasutras before he ventured to criticize the time honored one of Sankaracarya. Madhva assured him that he would be doing so, in good time. At

Srirangam he came in contact with the followers of the Ramanuja school and after exchanging views with them, noted his own points of agreement and difference with them. This South Indian tour gave him great resolve to set out on his first tour of the north.

Madhvacarya was anxious to go to Badarikasrama and receive personal inspiration from a visit to the asrama of Vyasadeva. After staying forty-eight days at Badarinath, fasting, praying, meditating and dedicating his Gita-Bhasya to the Lord, Madhvacarya was inspired to go to the hermitage of Vyasa. He went there all alone and after gaining the personal darshan of Vyasadeva himself and learning from him, returned after some months, glowing with divine inspiration and wrote his Bhasya on the Brahma-Sutras.

Journeying through Bihar, Bengal, Orissa, Andhrapradesa, Maharashtra and Karnataka, he returned to Udipi. On his way back from Badarikasrama, Madhvacarya challenged many eminent scholars of the day. Prominent among these were two outstanding scholars, Swami Sastrin and Sobhana Bhatta, known as masters of the six systems of philosophy. Madhvacarya soundly defeated these two who subsequently became his disciples known as Narahari Tirtha and Padmanabha Tirtha respectively.

Madhvacarya’s fame and prestige had grown considerably and his commentaries on the Gita and Brahmasutras had made their mark and were widely recognized and respected. In his Math in Udipi he introduced strict codes of conduct for his followers, introduced the system of Pistapasuyagas (offerings made from flowers), in place of actual animal sacrifices in yajnas and imposed the rigorous observance of fasts on Ekadasi. To foster a sense of fellowship among his disciples he installed a beautiful deity of Lord Krsna.

"Once, as Madhva was traveling in the association of his disciples he arrived in Sri Navadwipa and decided to spend some days within the forests of Modradumadvipa.

One night, as Madhva lay sleeping, Lord Gauranga appeared to him in a dream. The Lord told Madhava, "It is well known to everyone that you are My eternal servitor. When I appear here in Navadwipa, I will accept your sampradaya. Travel everywhere and care fully uproot all the false scriptures of the mayavadis and reveal the glories of worshipping the personal form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Later, when I appear, I will personally broadcast your

pure teachings." The Lord then disappeared.

When Madhva awoke, he was astonished and as he remembered the Lord he began to cry in separation, saying, "Will I ever see that beautiful golden form again?" A celestial voice from the sky replied, "Worship Me secretly and you will come to Me."

Carrying these instructions within his heart, Madhva continued his travels more determined than ever to defeat the mayavadi philosophers." (from Sri Navadwipa Dham).

During a meeting between King Jayasimha, the Ruler of Kumbla and Madhvacarya, a historic disputation developed with the ruler’s court pandit, Trivikrama Pandit, who was the foremost authority on Advaita-vedanta. Trivikrama engaged Madhvacarya in a vigorous debate for fifteen days, at the temple of Kudil and was defeated by the Acarya. He sought to become a disciple of Madhvacarya and was readily admitted. He was then commissioned to write a commentary on the Brahma-Sutra Bhasya, and named it Tattva-pradipa.

An interesting incident took place during his second trip to North India. With the country under tight control of the Persian invaders, traveling became very hazardous. With Madhvacarya’s knowledge of Persian, his courage and tact in handling difficult situations and his ability to rise to equal occasions with dignity and complete self-possession, he was able to escape from potentially dangerous encounters. One such episode took place with his meeting with Sultan Jalal-uddin-Khilji. Political hostilities were on at the time. Madhvacarya and his party were forced to swim across the Ganges to the other side. They were halted on reaching the shore and were taken to the Ruler who called upon Madhva to explain his conduct in disobeying orders and crossing the river when hostilities were on. Madhvacarya spoke to the Ruler in his own language, convincing him on the importance of his mission in the cause of Theism.

After completing many commentaries and original erudite works, establishing prominant Maths and sending out well-chosen veterans to preach and propagate his siddhanta all over the country, while seated during a shower of flowers, Madhvacarya disappeared from vision and transferred himself to Badarikasrama. There he still remains.

Shri Madvacaharya taught that:

1.Krishna, who is known as Hari is the Supreme Lord, the Absolute.
2.That Supreme Lord may be known through the Vedas.
3.The material world is real.
4. The jivas, or souls, are different from the Supreme Lord.
5.The jivas are by nature servants of the Supreme Lord.
6.There are two categories of jivas: liberated and illusioned.
7.Liberation means attaining the lotus feet of Krishna and entering into an eternal relationship of service to Him.
8.Pure devotional service is the cause of this relationship.
9.The truth may be known through direct perception, inference, and Vedic authority.

Sri Matsya Avatara

Matsya-avatara is the first of the ten avataras. Srila Krsnadäsa Kaviraja Goswami has discussed infinite avataras in his abridged general review of the Prime Original Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krsna, in Sri Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya-lila, Chapter 20. There, he writes that the lila-avatara (pastime avatara) is one of the six distinct kinds of principal descents of Sri Krsna. Among lila-avataras, the first is Matsya-avatara. There are countless numbers of lila-avataras mentioned in Sri Caitanya-caritamrta. In his commentary on Madhya-lila (20.245), Srila Bhakti Siddhänta Sarasvaté has discussed twenty-five principal lila-avataras. Chapter 3 of the First Canto of Srimad-Bhägavatam also describes various descents of the Lord and Their characteristics.

sankarsäna, matsyadika,-dui bheda tanra
sankarsana -purusavatara, lilavatara ara
(Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya 20.244)

"The first personal expansion is Sankarsana and the others are avataras like the fish avatara. Sankarsana is an expansion of the Purusa, or Visnu. The expansions such as Matsya appear in different yugas for specific pastimes."

lilavatara krsnera na yaya ganana
pradhana kariya kahi dig-daraçana
matsya, kurma, raghunatha, nrsimha, vamana
varahadi lekha yantra na yaya ganana
(Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya 20.297- 298)

"No one can count the innumerable pastime avataras of Lord Krsna, but I shall describe the principal ones. Some of the pastime avataras are Matsya, Kürma, Lord Ramacandra, Lord Nrsimha, Lord Vamana and Lord Varaha. There is no end to Them."

Among the eighteen Puranas, the Matsya Purana describes the pastimes of Matsya-avatara. When Saunaka and other resident sages of Naimisaranya expressed their desire to hear the pastimes of Matsya-avatara from Sri Ugrasrava (Suta Goswami), the son of Sri Lomaharsana Suta, he spoke as follows:

"In ancient times, King Manu, the son of the sun-god, entrusted the kingdom to his son and performed severe austerities for ten thousand years. When Brahma became pleased by his austerities and wished to confer a boon upon him, the king prayed to grandfather Brahma and said, 'Please give me the boon that I may save the living beings of this world and the world itself during the time of annihilation.' Brahma said, 'So be it!' He then disappeared, while the devas (demigods) showered flowers from heaven. Thereafter, one day when Manu was offering oblations to the ancestors while sitting in his asrama, a saphari (a kind of tiny fish-a minnow) jumped into his hands. Out of compassion, and for the safety of the small fish, he placed it in his water pot. Overnight the fish became as large as a finger, and finding it difficult to stay in the small water pot, it prayed to the king, 'Please save me! Please save me!' Feeling compassion for the fish, Manu transferred it to a clay vessel. The fish again expanded, but this time to the length of three hands, within one night. It expressed its difficulty by saying to the king, ‘I have surrendered to you. Please save me! Please save me!’ Then Manu put the fish in a well, but once again, due to a shortage of space, he put it in a lake, and then in the Ganges where it continued expanding greatly until he had no choice but to transfer it to the ocean. What had originally been a tiny fish now occupied an entire ocean. Manu became afraid upon seeing the

whole ocean occupied, and began to think that this must surely be the Supreme Lord, Vasudeva, otherwise how could His body have expanded to the size of 200,000 yojanas? Understanding the Lord to have appeared as a fish, Manu offered his obeisances to Him. After accepting his obeisances, Matsya spoke to the king, making him aware of His real nature, 'O King, the earth will soon be flooded with water. I have a boat made by the demigods that is intended to save all the living entities. You should put the sweat-born or insects, the earth-born or those born from shoots and sprouts, the womb-born and all other helpless living beings on the boat to save them from the imminent deluge. When a strong storm approaches, you should tie the boat to my horn. You will become the prajapati (progenitor) after the universal dissolution of the whole world. In this way, at the beginning of Satya-yuga you will become the omniscient king of the next manvantara (the duration of a reign of Manu).'

"After that, when Manu asked when the annihilation would happen and how the living beings would be saved, Lord Matsya informed him of the coming of drought, famine and fire burning the earth, culminating in the submersion of the three worlds due to excessive rain. Everything would be reduced to one ocean (ekarnava). As per the Lord’s words, at the time of annihilation Lord Janardana appeared in the form of a fish with a horn protruding from His head. The great serpent Vasuki came to Manu to act as a rope. Pious Manu, the knower of dharma, gathered together all the living beings by his yogic spiritual power and put them safely onto the boat. He tied the snake to the horn of the Divine Fish. Lord Matsya, Brahma, Soma, Surya, the four worlds, the pious river Narmadä, Markandeya, Rsi, Lord Bhava (Mahadeva), the Vedas, Puranas and all kinds of knowledge were manifested in Manu. Lord Matsya also told Manu that at the end of the Caksusa-manvantara, when the world would become ekarnava after dissolution, He would once again appear to rescue and re-establish the Vedas."

The story of Matsya-avatara has also been described in Chapter 24 of the Eighth Canto of Srimad-Bhagavatam. Pariksit Maharaja desired to hear about the pastimes of Matsya-avatara, the earliest or first of the ten avataras, and spoke to Sri Sukadeva Gosvami as follows:

Sri rajovaca

bhagavaï chrotum icchami harer adbhuta-karmanah
avatara-katham ädyäm maya-matsya-vidambanam
(Srimad-Bhägavatam 8.24.1)

"Maharaja Pariksit said, 'The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Hari, is eternally situated in His transcendental position, yet He descends to this material world and manifests Himself in various forms. His first descent was that of a great fish. O most powerful Sukadeva Gosvami, I wish to hear from you the pastimes of that manifestation of the Lord as a fish.'"

One day of Brahma is called a kalpa. Brahma's one day is beyond human calculation. The durations of the four ages or yugas have been described as follows: the duration of Kali-yuga is 432,000 solar years, double this is the duration of Dvapara-yuga, triple is that of Treta-yuga and quadruple is the duration of Satya-yuga. The four yugas combined are called one divya-yuga or catur-yuga. The reign of one Manu is comprised of 71 such divya- or catur-yugas. The span of life of fourteen Manus is the duration of one day of the life of Brahma. Similar also is the duration of one night of Brahma. At the end of one day of Brahma or at the end of a kalpa, partial annihilation takes place.
At the end of his day, Brahma was feeling drowsy and desired to sleep. At that time, an asura (demon) named Hayagriva stole the Vedas from the mouth of Brahma and entered into the waters of annihilation. Brahma then wondered how, at the beginning of his day, he was going to perform the task of creating the world in the absence of the Vedas. Thinking like this, Brahma took shelter of Lord Visnu. At the beginning of the Svayambhuva-manvantara, Lord Visnu, in His appearance as a fish, killed the demon Hayagriva and rescued the Vedas. He then delivered the Vedas to Brahma:

atita-pralayapaya utthitaya sa vedhase
hatvasuram hayagrivam vedan pratyaharad dharih
(Srimad-Bhägavatam 8.24.57)

"At the end of the last inundation (during the reign of Svayambhuva Manu) the Supreme Personality of Godhead killed the demon Hayagriva and delivered all the Vedic literatures to Lord Brahma when he awoke from sleeping."

Lord Matsya appeared twice in this kalpa. First, during the Svayambhuva-manvantara, he killed the demon Hayagriva and rescued the Vedic literature. Later, at the end of the Cäksusa-manvantara, He appeared and bestowed His mercy on King Satyavrata.
In the commentary on Srimad-Bhägavatam, Eighth Canto, Chapter 24, Verse 37 published by Sri Caitanya Matha, the explanation of a statement from Laghu-

bhagavatamrta is as follows:

Agastya Muni cursed Svayambhuva Manu, which caused an annihilation to occur in the middle of the manvantara. This annihilation has been described in the Matsya Purana. During the Caksusa-manvantara, the annihilation began suddenly by the will of the Lord. In the Visnu-dharmottara, this story was narrated to Vajra by Markandeya Rsi. Generally, annihilation does not take place at the end of a manvantara. At the end of the Caksusa-manvantara, by His maya potency, the Supreme Lord displayed the annihilation to Satyavrata as in a dream. Speaking in this way, Sripada Sridhar Swami (the original commentator on Srimad-Bhagavatam) has not accepted the annihilation at the end of a manvantara.

There is nothing that the Supreme Lord will not do for the pleasure of His devotee. In reality, it is only the devotee who is the root cause of the appearance of the Supreme Lord. To accept the service of His devotee, the Supreme Lord performs the pastime of being incapable. It was to accept the service of His devotee, Satyavrata, that the Lord first performed the pastime of being incapable.

During the Cäksusa-manvantara, a devotee of Lord Narayana named King Satyavrata performed severe austerities by drinking only water. One day, Satyavrata was offering oblations in the Krtamala River when he saw a tiny fish in the water cupped in his palms. Satyavrata, the king of Dravida, threw the fish into the water. The small fish then said in great distress, "O merciful king! I am a small fish; big fish will eat Me. Knowing this, why did you throw Me into the river? I am very scared. Please protect Me." Hearing the distressful words of the fish, the king placed the fish in his water pot and went back to his asrama. Within one night, the small fish grew so much that it was difficult for it to remain in the water-pot. The fish again offered prayers expressing that it did not want to remain in that difficult condition. It wanted to be kept in a bigger pot where it could move about freely; so the sage put the fish into the water of a big wok. But in that place, within one muhurta (forty-eight minutes), it again expanded to the length of three hands. Upon the repeated prayers of the fish, it was placed in a pond, then a large freshwater lake, and finally the ocean. While entering into the ocean, the fish spoke to King Satyavrata in a humorous way, "There are many large crocodiles and other creatures in the ocean; they will eat Me. It is not proper to leave Me here." Hearing the sweet words of the fish, the king understood that it was not an ordinary fish. This wonderful entity was the Supreme Lord Himself in the form of a fish. The king replied, "You are making

fun of me in Your form as a fish. Who are You actually? Within one day You have occupied the entire area of this huge freshwater lake, 800 miles long. I have never seen or heard of such an amazing and powerful aquatic. You must surely be the Supreme Lord Hari. You have taken the form of an aquatic to favor all the living beings. I am taking shelter of You. Please grace me. Although all Your lila-avataras are for the eternal welfare of living beings, what is the purpose of Your appearance as a fish? Please tell me."

In reply, the Supreme Lord Hari in the form of a fish said, "On the seventh day from today, the three worlds will be inundated by the waters of annihilation. I will send you a big boat at that time. You should put all kinds of herbs (medicinal plants) and seeds on the boat. Surrounded by the seven great sages, you should ride on that great boat with all the living entities and float freely on the ocean of annihilation. When your boat trembles due to the force of a strong wind, you should tie the boat to My horn using the great serpent Vasuki. I will pull the boat with you and the sages until the night of Brahma ends. At that time you will come to know of My glories." Having said that, Sri Hari disappeared. After His disappearance, King Satyavrata was waiting for the time foretold by Sri Hari. He sat down on kusa grass facing the northeastern direction and meditated on the lotus feet of Lord Matsya. At that time, he saw that terrible rainfall was swelling the ocean to cover the land on the shore and was gradually covering the whole earth. Being very much afraid, the king began to look for shelter. Suddenly he saw that a great boat had come to him. Taking herbs, seeds and so on with him, the king boarded the boat along with the best of the brahmanas. The brahmanas asked the king to meditate on Lord Kesava for protection from this danger. Upon meditating steadily, the king saw that Lord Matsya had appeared. His body was one million miles (400,000 krosas) long, glowing like gold, and He had a horn on His head. As instructed, the king used Vasuki as a rope and tied him to the horn of the giant fish. He then offered prayers to Lord Matsya. Being satisfied by his prayers, the Supreme Lord enlightened the king with knowledge of the Supreme Truth. By the mercy of Lord Visnu in the form of a fish, the king became fully enlightened and took birth as Vaivasvata Manu (in the form of Sraddhadeva) in the present kalpa.

pralaya-payodhi-jale dhrtavan asi vedaà
vihita-vahitra-caritram akhedam
kesava dhrta-mina sarira jaya jagadisa hare
(Sri Jayadeva’s Dasavatara-stotra, 1st Verse)

"O Kesava! O Lord of the universe! O Lord Hari, who have assumed the form of a fish! All glories unto You! You easily acted as a boat in the form of a giant fish just to give protection to the Vedas, which had become immersed in the turbulent sea of devastation."

Sri Murari Gupta

murari-gupto hanuman
angadah sri-purandarah
yah sri-sugriva-namasid
govindananda eva sah

Murari Gupta was Hanuman in Ramachandra's lila; Purandara was Angada and Govindananda Sugriva. (Gaura-ganoddesa-dipika 91). Murari Gupta took birth in a family of Ayurvedic physicians in the district of Sylhet.

The word gupta means "hidden", so the name Murari Gupta indicates that Murari (Sri Chaitanya Deva) had secretly taken up permanent residence in his heart. (Chaitanya Bhagavat 2.10.31)

Mahaprabhu's special mercy to Murari

Lord Gaurahari had the same kind of affection for Murari Gupta that Lord Ramachandra had for his servant, Hanuman. (Chaitanya Bhagavat 2.3.11) On the occasion of the 21-hour great manifestation (maha-prakasa) at Srivasa Angana, the Lord gave Murari a vision of himself as Ramachandra. When he saw his worshipable deity before him, Murari fainted. Then he glorified the Lord in a way which so pleased him that he gave a benediction to Murari which fulfilled all his desires.

Murari and Nityananda Prabhu

At Srivasa's house, Mahaprabhu taught the spiritual truths about himself, Nityananda Prabhu and matters of etiquette through Murari. One day, Murari Gupta came to Srivasa's house. Upon arriving, he first paid obeisances to Mahaprabhu and then to Nityananda. Mahaprabhu said, "This is not correct." Murari could not understand what he meant. That night when he returned home, he had a dream in which he saw Nityananda as Balaram, fanning Mahaprabhu/Krishna with a fly whisk. Murari then understood what Mahaprabhu had been telling him and from then on first paid obeisances to Nityananda and afterwards to Mahaprabhu. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur writes in his Gaudiya-bhasya, "Sri Murari was a worshiper of Balaram. Therefore to worship the Supreme Lord without first worshiping the guru and the jagad-guru is a mistake in sequence."

Murari cures the Lord’s indigestion

The Lord is very happy to accept a devotee's offering, no matter how it is made. When Murari returned home, he told his wife that he wished to eat. His devoted wife carefully prepared rice with ghee and gave it to her husband. But Murari, absorbed in contemplation on Krishna, took handful after handful of the food and threw it on the ground, offering it to the Lord in this way. The amazing thing is that even though Mahaprabhu was not physically present there at that time, he accepted the offering. The next day he came to Murari's house and said to him, "I have come to you for medicine. You made me eat so much, insisting that I take and eat. Now I have indigestion. You must give me some water, that will be the remedy for my stomach problem." Mahaprabhu took water from a jug in Murari's house, drinking down its entire contents. Seeing this, Murari fainted and all the devotees began to cry. (Chaitanya Bhagavat 2.20.69-71)

Murari’s exclusive devotion to Rama

Mahaprabhu taught the principle of devotion to one's worshipable deity through Murari Gupta. One cannot advance in devotional service without a particular devotion to a worshipable deity, or ista-devata. Murari was an incarnation of Hanuman, and he saw Chaitanya Mahaprabhu as Ramachandra. On one

occasion, Mahaprabhu desired to test his loyalty to his worshipable deity Rama by telling him to worship Krishna. He explained to Murari that Krishna was the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the fountainhead of all the other incarnations. Because he was the ocean of all the devotional flavors, the joy to be had in worshiping Krishna could not be had in the service of any other form of the Lord. Murari promised Mahaprabhu that he would do as he advised and worship Krishna, but when he returned to his home, he could not give up the lotus feet of Ramachandra. Just the thought of it made him upset and he stayed awake the entire night. In the morning, he went to Mahaprabhu and fell at his feet with tears in his eyes. He humbly submitted to the Lord:

I have sold my head to Ramachandra. I cannot remove it from his feet, for as soon as I try, it causes me great pain. I cannot give up the lotus feet of Raghunatha, even though this means disobeying you. What can I do? O merciful one, please allow my to give up my life here before you rather than suffer this fate. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.15.149-151)

Mahaprabhu was greatly satisfied to hear this exclusive devotional attitude to the worshipable deity. He said, "You are Hanuman himself, the eternal servant of Ramachandra. Indeed, why should you give up worshiping his feet?" Sri Jiva Goswami's father Anupama was similarly devoted to Rama. Mahaprabhu compared him to Murari when Sanatan told him that Anupama was not able to give up worshiping Rama despite his brothers' exhortations.

Mahaprabhu said, "Previously, I tested Murari Gupta and found him also to be devoted to Rama in the same way. That devotee who does not abandon his worshipable deity's lotus feet is truly glorious. Glorious too is that Lord who does not abandon his devotee." (Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.4.45-46)

Murari Gupta disappeared on the same full-moon day as the autumn rasa-lila festival.

Sri Narottama Das Thakur

akumara-brahmacari sarva-tirtha-darshi
parama-bhagavatottamah shrila-narottama-dasa

A brahmachari for his entire life, Narottama Das visited all the places of pilgrimage. He was on the highest platform of devotional achievement. (Bhakti-ratnakara 1.256)
Narottama Thakur was Campaka Manjari in Krishna-lila. Eternally assisting Rupa Manjari in her service to Radha and Krishna, Campaka Manjari had mercy on the conditioned souls of this earth and appeared as Narottama in the village of Kheturi, about twelve miles from Rampur Bowaliya in the Gopalpur subdivision of Rajshahi district. This took place on the full moon day of the month of Magh sometime around the middle of the 15th century of the Shaka era.

Narottama was born on the Maghi Purnima. From that day on he thrived and grew like the waxing moon.
(Bhakti-ratnakara 1.281)

Narottama's father was Raja Krishnananda Datta, the zamindar of the Gopalpur area. His mother's name was Narayani Devi. Raja Krishnananda had a younger brother named Purushottam Datta, who had a son named Santosha. In order to show that his associates can take birth in any caste, Krishna had Narottama take birth in a kayastha family.

From his early childhood, Narottama began to display symptoms of his future greatness. Everyone was amazed to see his great intelligence and his devotional demeanor. He was constantly absorbed in meditation on the wonderful qualities of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Nityananda Prabhu. The Lord and his associates appeared to him in his dreams.

As tears poured from his eyes, Narottama would offer prayers of surrender to Sri Krishna Chaitanya, Nityananda, Advaita and the other associates of the Lord. Finally, the Lord and his associates appeared to him in a dream and consoled him with kind words.
(Bhakti-ratnakara 1.285-6)

Mahaprabhu Leaves Prema Behind for Narottama

According to the Premavilasa, when Mahaprabhu passed through Kanair Natashala, as he was dancing ecstatically in kirtan, he began to call out the name Narottama. When Nityananda asked him why he was calling out this name, Mahaprabhu answered, “My Lord. You do not know your own glories. When we went to Jagannath Puri, you shed tears out of divine love, day after day. I managed to capture your divine love and save it. Now I wish to keep it here by the Padmavati River for Narottama Das.”
Mahaprabhu then went on to the Padmavati River to the place known as Kutubpur, where he bathed and sang and danced in ecstasy. He then called out to the river, “O Padmavati! Take my love and keep it here. When Narottama comes and bathes here, give it to him.”

The Padmavati inquired, “How will I recognize him?”

Mahaprabhu answered, “You will know it is Narottama, for when he enters your waters, you will overflow.”

The place where Mahaprabhu placed prema for Narottama’s sake was later given the name Prematali. When Narottama was twelve years old, he had a dream in which Nityananda Prabhu told him to bathe in the Padmavati and take the prema which had been stored there for him. He went the next day to the Padma and as soon as he put his foot in the water, the river started to overflow. The Padmavati then remembered Mahaprabhu’s words and gave Narottama the prema which she had been safeguarding for him.

Narottama Leaves Home

As soon as he experienced the ecstasies of prema, Narottama’s character, his appearance, everything about him changed. His parents noticed the transformation and did everything they could to bring him back to his normal state, but failed. Having drunk the wine of divine ecstasy, Narottama had become intoxicated and the bonds of family life could no longer hold him back.

Narottama began to wonder how he could escape from his material entanglements. Finally, one day when his father and uncle were away on official business, he practiced some deception on his mother and tricked his bodyguards so that he could leave his family for Vrindavan. It was the full-moon day of Karttik when this event took place.

According to others, Narottama waited to go to Vrindavan until after the death of his father when his cousin Santosha was given the responsibility for the zamindari. Even though he was the son of a rich zamindar, in his desire to unite with the Lord, he was ready to abandon the pleasures of the body in a moment. Day and night, he cried, walking barefoot, forgetting to eat and to drink until finally he would fall unconscious under a tree. One golden-skinned Brahmin came and offered him a cup of milk and said to him in a sweet voice, “O Narottama, drink this milk. Your cuts and bruises will go away. Take it easy.”

After saying this, the Brahmin vanished and the exhausted Narottama finally fell asleep. That night, he dreamt of Rupa and Sanatan Goswami. The two Goswamis placed their hands on his chest and fed him the milk that Mahaprabhu himself had brought him. All of Narottama’s fatigue disappeared.

Narottama is Initiated by Lokanatha Goswami

The Prema-vilasa also describes how Narottama took initiation from Lokanatha Goswami. Narottama was born on Maghi purnima, his renunciation took place on the Karttik purnima, and he was initiated by Lokanatha on the Shravan purnima.
Lokanatha Goswami is considered to be a personal associate of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Indeed, he was the first Gaudiya Vaishnava to be instructed by the Lord to go to Vrindavan, along with Bhugarbha Goswami. Lokanatha set the standard for worship in a spirit of renunciation while in the dham. He was a viviktanandi Vaishnava, i.e., he took pleasure in worshiping the Lord in solitude. In this spirit, he had vowed not to take any disciples. Narottama Das too made a vow -- to take initiation from no one other than Lokanatha. Though he was the son of a raja, Narottama’s desire to receive Lokanatha’s mercy was so great that he went in the middle of every night to clean the place he used as a toilet. He would also leave fine earth and water for him to clean himself afterward. This is described as follows in the Prema-vilasa:

He went to the place where the Goswami performed his bodily functions and did a special job of cleaning it. He sifted the earth to make fine, clean earth with which Lokanatha could clean his hands. He did this as a regular service. He would hide the broom of coconut leaves in the earth and each night take them out to sweep the place, his heart filled with joy. He considered himself fortunate and his body worthwhile. He would hold the broom to his chest, repeating, “This is the power that will help me attain my lord’s lotus feet.” As he said these

words, he cried and torrents of tears washed over his chest.

Lokanatha was astonished to see that the place was daily being kept clean. He became curious to find out who it was and so, one evening, he went and hid in the jungle, chanting japa the entire night in wait for the anonymous benefactor. At midnight, he saw someone engaged in cleaning the place and asked him who he was. When he found out that Narottama, the son of a raja, was doing such a filthy task, he felt embarrassed and told him to desist. Narottama, however, immediately fell at Lokanatha's feet began to cry. When Lokanatha saw Narottama's humility and pain, his resolve softened and gave him initiation. Thus Narottama gave an outstanding example to the world of how one should behave in the service of one's spiritual master.

At that moment, Narottama went there and with great enthusiasm, engaged in the necessary service to his guru. Lokanatha was pleased with his service and initiated him in the mantra, demonstrating the greatest mercy on Narottama. (Bhakti-ratnakara 1.345-6)

Without caring for his youth or his physical beauty, he left home on the full moon day of the month of Karttik. After wandering through many pilgrimage places, he finally came to Vrindavan where he became Lokanatha Goswami's disciple. On the auspicious day of Shravani purnima, Lokanatha initiated Narottama.

Thus Narottama Das was Lokanatha's one and only disciple. The founder of the world-wide Gaudiya Maths and the flagship monastery in Mayapur, the Chaitanya Math, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur, similarly demonstrated a determination and patience in service to his spiritual master in order to convince him to accept him as a disciple. Gaura Kishora Das Babaji, like Lokanatha, had vowed to take no disciples. He refused Srila Prabhupada three times, but this did not break Prabhupada's will. When Gaura Kishora saw his humility and intense desire, he finally relented and gave him mantra diksha. Srila Prabhupada was Gaura Kishora Das's only disciple.

After the disappearance of Rupa and Sanatan Goswamis, Sri Jiva Goswami became the undisputed intellectual leader of all Gaudiya Vaishnavas throughout Mathura, Bengal and Orissa and the chief-minister of the universal court of Vaishnavas at Vrindavan -- the Vishva-vaishnava-raja-sabha. Srinivas Acharya, Narottama Das, and Duhkhi Krishna Das all studied the scriptures under Jiva,

receiving detailed personal instruction from him. When their studies were completed, Jiva gave them the titles of Acharya, Thakur and Shyamananda, respectively.

Narottama Returns to Bengal

After their studies were complete, Jiva sent his three students to Bengal with the Vaishnava scriptures. Sri Jiva heard the news that the books had been stolen in Bana Vishnupura and then later that they had been recovered. This story has been told in this book on pages 165 to 166 in the chapter on Srinivas.

Lokanatha Goswami considered Narottama's previous life as a wealthy zamindar to be particularly suitable for preaching in his home area of northern Bengal and thought that with his status he would be able to teach the standards of renounced devotional behavior. Out of compassion for that country's people, he ordererd Narottama to return to his home town of Kheturi. Srinivas was aware of Lokanatha's intention, so when the books were stolen, he told Narottama to continue on his way to Kheturi. Srinivas Acharya said, "Go quickly to Kheturi and carry out Lokanatha's orders."
(Bhakti-ratnakara 7.119)

Anchorite devotees (viviktanandis), being absorbed in the intimate service of the Lord on the transcendental platform, normally have no taste for engaging in any welfare activity which brings only temporary succor to materialistic persons, bound by Maya and absorbed in their bodily identification. Materialistic welfare activities are considered to be of great value only when there is a misunderstanding about the real goal of life--service to Krishna. Lokanatha taught the world through his disciple, on the principle that "a housewife teaches the daughter-in-law by instructing the daughter." Though Narottama himself was distraught with separation from his spiritual master, he nevertheless took his order seriously and returned to Kheturi where he began preaching the doctrines of pure devotional service to the people of northern Bengal. Narottama revealed his emotional state somewhat in his Prarthana,

aneka duhkhera pare, layechile vraja-pure
kripa-dora galaya bandhiya
daiva-maya balatkare, khasaiya sei dore
bhavakupe dileka dariya
punah yadi kripa kari, e janare keshe dhari

taniya tulaha vraja-dhame
tabe se dekhiye bhala, natuba parana gela
kahe dina dasa narottame

After a great deal of suffering, you finally dragged me to Vraja-dham, tying the rope of mercy around my neck. But now, the forces of fate and illusion have loosened that rope and thrown me back down the well of material existence.

If you would only be merciful to me and grab me by the hair, pulling me back into Vraja-dham. Then everything will seem right once more, otherwise, Narottama says, his life is over.

On Lokanatha Goswami's orders, Narottama installed six sets of deities in his temple in Kheturi: Gauranga, Vallabhikanta, Vrajamohana, Sri Krishna, Radhakanta, and Radharamana. The great festival which he held on that occasion is still remembered in the Vaishnava world.

Narottama arrived in Gauda-desha. He had been ordered by Lokanatha to establish the deity service of both Gauranga and Krishna, to serve the Vaishnavas and to preach the congregational chanting of the Holy Names. He immediately dedicated himself to carrying out these orders. First he set about establishing the service of six sets of beautiful deities, whose names, taken together, bring joy to the heart of the devotees:

gauranga vallabhi-kanta shri-krishna vraja-mohana
radha-ramana he radhe radha-kanta namo'stu te
(Bhakti-ratnakara 1.422-6)

The Great Festival at Kheturi

Prior to the Kheturi-mahotsava, Narottama Das Thakur traveled throughout Bengal and Orissa, visiting various places where Mahaprabhu had performed his pastimes, meeting the Lord's associates and receiving their blessings. Amongst the places he visited were Uddharan Datta's home in Saptagram; Khardaha, where he met Paramesvari Das, and Nityananda's shaktis, Jahnava and Vasudha; Khanakula Krishnanagara, the home of Abhiram Thakur; Shyamananda's home in Nrisinghapura; the Shripatas of Narahari and Raghunandan in Shrikhanda; and the birthplace of Nityananda Prabhu in Ekacakra-dham; Gopinath Acharya's home, Hari Das Thakur's samadhi tomb, Gadadhara Pandit's place of worship,

the Jagannath temple and Gundicha, the Jagannath-vallabha gardens, Narendra-sarovara, etc. in Jagannath Puri.

Most of the living associates of Mahaprabhu and other leaders of the sampradaya came to Kheturi on the occasion of the festival organized by Narottama Das. A list of these has been given by Narahari Chakravarti in his books, Bhakti-ratnakara and Narottama-vilasa: Shyamananda Prabhu, Jahnava Devi, Paramesvari Das, Krishna Das Sarkhela (Jahnava's uncle), Madhava Acharya (Nityananda's son-in-law), Raghupati Vaidya, Minaketan Rama Das, Murari Chaitanya Das, JïanaDas, Mahidhara, Sri Shankara, Kamalakara Pippalai, Gauranga Das, Nakarii, Krishna Das, Damodar, Balaram Das, Sri Mukunda, Vrindavan Das Thakur; Raghunandan Thakur and other devotees from Shrikhanda; Shripati and Shrinidhi (Srivasa's brothers) came from Nabadwip; Advaita's sons, Achyutananda, Gopal Mishra and Krishna Mishra came from Shantipur; Hriday Chaitanya and other devotees from Ambika Kalna, etc.

Srinivas Acharya acted as the officiating priest at the festival and performed the rituals installing the deities. In the kirtan led by Narottama which followed, Mahaprabhu and his associates themselves appeared.

Who can describe the joy of that kirtan? Mahaprabhu himself and his associates all became incarnate just like lightning in a conglomeration of rainclouds. (Bhakti-ratnakara 10.571-2)

The kirtan was amazing: you could see Nityananda Prabhu and Advaita Acharya overcome with ecstasy and Gauranga, encircled by the devotees. What wonderful compassion the Lord displayed on that day! Who can understand these wonderful pastimes? What blessings he poured on Narottama and Srinivas, for they and their companions found the fulfillment of all their desires. (Bhakti-ratnakara 10.605-7)

After the Kheturi festival, Narottama's fame spread throughout the Vaishnava world. Prominent Brahmins like Ramakrishna Acharya and Ganga-Narayan Chakravarti became his disciples.

Narottama's Preaching Adventures

Narahari Chakravarti has described Narottama's activities extensively in his Narottama-vilasa. One can understand his outstanding feats by reading this

book.
In Gopalpura village, there was a Brahmin named Vipra Das. He had a poisonous snake living in his wicker grain-storage bin (gola). When Narottama visited Vipra Das's house, the snake vanished, and in its place appeared deities of Gaura and Vishnupriya.

Gaurasundara and his beloved Vishnupriya came out of the gola and climbed into Narottama's lap in plain view of everyone.
(Bhakti-ratnakara 10.202)

Everyone was quite amazed. These same deities are today being served in Gambhila.

A certain smarta Brahmin scholar blasphemed Narottama, calling him a shudra. As a result he was attacked by leprosy. He later had a vision of the Goddess in a dream. He went and fell at Narottama Das's feet and begged him for forgiveness, as she had told him to, and was thus freed from the terrible disease.

Harirama and Ramakrishna, the sons of Shivananda Acharya, were taking a goat and a buffalo to be offered as a sacrifice to the Goddess on the order of their father. They met Narottama and Ramachandra Kaviraj on the way and were attracted by their effulgent beauty. Narottama Thakur advised the two young Brahmins to abandon worship in the modes of passion and ignorance which entailed violence to animals and to worship the Supreme Lord without any desire. The brothers immediately let the goat and buffalo go and bathed in the Padma. They then took initiation from Narottama and dedicated their lives to the service of Lord Krishna and his devotees.

When Shivananda Acharya heard about this, he became angry and called a Smarta scholar from Mithila named Murari to come and defeat Narottama's Vaishnava philosophy. However, Harirama and Ramakrishna were given divine blessings by their guru and were able to defeat every one of the Smarta's arguments with scriptural evidence. Defeated, Shivananda Acharya went to pray to the Goddess. She appeared to him that night in a dream and rebuked him for his enmity to the Vaishnavas and told him to cease all such behavior.

In the course of time, Ganga Narayan Chakravarti, Jagannath Acharya and other well-known Brahmins started to become Narottama's disciples. This caused a stir in the Smarta community and they went to complain to Raja Narasimha:

“Narottama is a shudra who makes disciples of Brahmins. He is using some kind of mystic powers or hypnotism to convert them. He should be stopped.”

After discussions with Raja Narasimha, it was decided that a scholar named Rupa Narayan should be summoned to debate Narottama. This Brahmin had won numerous debates of this sort and was known as a digvijayi. The Raja himself set off with Rupa Narayan and a number of other Brahmins toward Kheturi.

Ramachandra Kaviraj and Ganga Narayan Chakravarti were upset to see the wicked intentions of the Raja and his pandita. When they heard that the Raja and his entourage were resting overnight in Kumarapura village, they went in disguise as a potter and a pan-seller and set up stalls in the village market. When the Brahmins came through the market, Ramachandra and Ganga Narayan spoke with them in Sanskrit. The Brahmins were astounded that even ordinary stall-keepers in the village were able to speak in Sanskrit. Ramachandra and Ganga Narayan began a debate with the Brahmins, defeating every Smarta argument that they put forward and establishing the pure doctrine of devotional service.

The Raja and his Digvijayi Pandit were rendered speechless by the scholarship of the two ordinary stall-keepers. When they learned that the two men were disciples of Narottama Das, the Raja said to his pandita, “If Narottama’s ordinary disciples can defeat you in debate, there is no need of going to see him.” But once again, the Goddess appeared to Narasimha and Rupa Narayan and ordered them to go to Narottama and pray for forgiveness for their offenses. The two of them did so and became devotees of Radha and Krishna.

Two Songs by Narottama

In the Gaudiya Vaishnava Abhidhana, the following comments are found: “Narottama’s ashrama was in a place called Bhajanatuli, about two miles from his capital city, Kheturi. Narottama did his preaching through kirtan. He created the style of kirtan known as Garanahati. He wrote two books, Prarthana and Prema-bhakti-candrika, which are like the very life of the devotees. He has written songs which are appropriate for every devotional mood, and this is what touches the devotees’ hearts. These two books are so popular that they have been published countless times. Narottama’s influence can be appreciated even in distant Manipura. Everyone agrees that the Vaishnava religion spread through Manipura through Narottama’s potency. His devotional songs are sung in every

home throughout Manipura state.

Srinivas Acharya’s disciple Ramachandra Kaviraj was Narottama’s dearest companion. Narottama received news of Ramachandra’s disappearance first; not long afterward he heard of Srinivas’s disappearance, he wrote the following song in the mood of separation which is capable of melting even a stone-like heart.

je anila prema-dhana karuna pracura
hena prabhu kotha gela acarya thakura
kahan mora Svarupa rupa, kahan sanatana?
kahan dasa raghunatha patita-pavana?
kahan mora bhatta-yuga, kahan kaviraja?
eka-kale kotha gela gora nataraja?
pashane kutiba matha anale pashiba
gauranga gunera nidhi kotha gele paba
se saba sangira sange je kaila vilasa
se sanga na païa kande narottama-dasa

Where has Acharya Thakur gone, he who out of great mercy brought the wealth of love as a gift to the world. Where are my Svarupa and Rupa, where is Sanatan? Where has Raghunath Das, the deliverer of the most fallen, gone? Where are Raghunath Bhatta and Gopal Bhatta? Where is Krishnadas Kaviraj? Where has the king of the dance, Gauranga, suddenly disappeared to? I will beat my head against the rocks or enter the flames--but where can I go to find that ocean of virtue, Gauranga? Narottama Das is crying because he is deprived of the association of all those companions of the Lord.
Narottama Das Thakur was the topmost of the followers of Rupa Goswami, Mahaprabhu’s close associate. His devotion to Rupa Goswami can be recognized from the following song:

shri rupa manjari pada sei mora sampada
sei mora bhajana pujana
sei mora prana-dhana sei more abharana
sei mora jivanera jivana
sei mora rasa-nidhi sei mora vaïcha-siddhi
sei mora vedera dharama
sei vrata, sei tapa sei mora mantra japa
sei mora dharama karama

anukula habe vidhi se pade haibe siddhi
nirakhiba ei dui nayane
se rupa madhuri-rashi prana-kuvalaya-shashi
praphullita habe nishi-dine

tuwa adarshana ahi garale jarala dehi
cira-dina tapita jivana
ha ha prabhu kara daya deha more pada-chaya
narottama laila sharana

Rupa Manjari's feet are my wealth; they are my worship, they are my ritual. They are what keep me alive, they are my ornament, they are the life of my life. They are my ocean of nectar, they are the perfection of my desire, they are my Vedic religion. They are my vow, they are my austerity, they are the mantra that I chant on my beads. They are my religious duty.

Fate will be kind to me, and I will find my perfection by attaining her feet and will be able to see with my own eyes the beauty of Radha and Krishna's form, the moon of the lily of my life.

The snake of your absence has burned up my body with its poison; I have suffered this pain for so long. O my lord, be merciful to me, give me the shade of your feet. Narottama has taken shelter.

Narottamashtaka by Vishvanath Chakravarti
shri-krishna-namamrita-varshi-vaktra-
candra-prabha-dhvasta-tamo-bharaya
gauranga-devanucaraya tasmai
namo namah shrila-narottamaya ||1||

I offer my repeated obeisances to Srila Narottama Das Thakur, who destroys the darkness of ignorance with the nectarean rays of Krishna's holy name which emanate from his moon-like face; to him who is the glorious follower of the divine Gauranga.

sankirtananandaja-manda-hasya-
danta-dyuti-dyotita-din-mukhaya
svedashru-dhara-snapitaya tasmai
namo namah shrila-narottamaya ||2||

I offer my repeated obeisances to Srila Narottama Das Thakur, who lights up every direction with the effulgence of his teeth, revealed as he laughs out of the joy of Harinama-sankirtan; to him who is bathed in torrents of tears and perspiration.

mridanga-nada-shruti-matra-caicat-
padambujamanda-manoharaya
sadyah samudyat-pulakaya tasmai
namo namah shrila-narottamaya ||3||

I offer my repeated obeisances to Srila Narottama Das Thakur, whose lotus feet dance enchantingly, being set into motion as soon as he hears the sound of the mridanga; whose body is covered with horripilation.

gandharva-garva-kshapana-svalasya-
vismapitashesha-kriti-vrajaya
sva-srishta-gana-prathitaya tasmai
namo namah shrila-narottamaya ||4||

I offer my repeated obeisances to Srila Narottama Das Thakur, whose dance and song, indeed, every action in kirtan brings shame to the Gandharvas; whose fame has spread through the songs he has written.

ananda-murcchavanipat-bhata-
dhuli-bharalankrita-vigrahaya
yad-darshanam bhagya-bharena tasmai
namo namah shrila-narottamaya ||5||

I offer my repeated obeisances to Srila Narottama Das Thakur, whose figure is decorated with the dust which covers it as he falls to the ground in an ecstatic faint; who can be seen only by one who has unlimited good fortune.

sthale sthale yasya kripa-prapabhih
krishnanya-trishna jana-samhatinam
nirmulita eva bhavanti tasmai
namo namah shrila-narottamaya ||6||

I offer my repeated obeisances to Srila Narottama Das Thakur, who rains down

mercy wherever he goes, causing every person’s desires, other than those for service to Krishna, to be uprooted.

yad-bhakti-nishtha pala-rekhikeva
sparshah punah sparsha-maniva yasya
pramanyam evam shrutivad yadiyam
tasmai namah shrila-narottamaya ||7||

I offer my repeated obeisances to Srila Narottama Das Thakur, whose firm devotion is like a line scratched in a stone, whose touch is like that of the philosopher’s stone and whose every word is as authoritative as that of the Veda.

murtaiva bhaktih kim ayam kim esha
vairagya-saras tanuman nriloke
sambhavyate yah kritibhih sadaiva
tasmai namah shrila-narottamaya ||8||

I offer my repeated obeisances to Srila Narottama Das Thakur, who appears to some as devotion itself incarnate, or as the essence of renunciation in human form -- this is forever the opinion of the wise.

rajan-mridanga-karatala-kalabhiramam
gauranga-gana-madhu-pana-bharabhiramam
shriman-narottama-padambuja-maïju-nrityam
bhrityam kritarthayatu mam phaliteshta-krityam ||9||

May the dancing of Srila Narottama Das Thakur’s lotus feet, which follows every beat of the drum and hand cymbals and which incarnates the beauty of his intoxication in the songs glorifying Gauranga bring fulfillment to me, his servant, by bringing to fruition all his sacrifices.

Sri Jiva gave both Srinivas Acharya’s disciple Ramachandra Sena and his brother Govinda the Kaviraj title.

[Excerpted from "Sri Chaitanya: His Life & Associates"]

Sri Nrisimha Avatara

The fourth among the Dasavatara is Sri Nrisimha-avatara. Among the innumerable avataras, twenty-five are pre-eminent as has been stated before in connection with Matsya-avatara. Of these twenty-five, Sri Nrisimhadeva is the fourteenth. He is the vaibhava-vilasa (expansion in magnificence) of the tadekatma form of Sri Krishna.

The second catur-vyuha (quadruple expansion) of Sri Krishna is comprised of Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, and each of these has two further vilasa expansions. Pradyumna's expansions are Sri Nrisimhadeva and Sri Janardana. Besides that, it is also described that in the second catur-vyuha, Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha are the prabhava-vilasa (predominating transcendental pastime expansions) of Sri Krishna. There are a total of twenty further expansions of these four prabhava-vilasa forms. They can be recognised according to the placement of four different symbols in Their hands: conch (sankha), mace (gada), lotus (padma) and disc (cakra). Regarding Sri Nrisimhadeva, these symbols appear in the order of cakra, padma, gada and sankha (disc in the lower right hand, lotus in the upper right hand, mace in the upper left hand and conch in the lower left hand).

In the Seventh Canto of Srimad-Bhagavatam, the pastime of Sri Nrisimhadeva's appearance is briefly narrated as follows:

Due to the curse of the four Kumaras (Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanat), Jaya and Vijaya, the doorkeepers of Vaikuntha, took birth as Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakasipu, as the two sons of Diti and Kasyapa Ashi. Of the two sons, Hiranyakasipu was senior and affectionate to his brother. Lord Sri Hari, in the form of Lord Varaha, took the side of the demigods and killed Hiranyaksha. Desiring to take revenge, Hiranyakasipu began to consider Lord Vishnu as his enemy and developed malicious feelings toward Him. He encouraged the demons to disturb ritualistic ceremonies and kill the brahmanas. He also decided to perform severe austerities for one hundred years to get the benediction of achieving unrivalled supremacy of the three worlds. When Lord Brahma became

pleased by his austerities and appeared before him, Hiranyakasipu asked for the benediction of becoming immortal. Lord Brahma explained his inability to give him the boon of immortality, so Hiranyakasipu asked for the boon of immortality in a different manner by requesting the following conditions: that he not be killed during the day or night, either inside or outside, in the sky or on the ground. He also asked that he not be killed by any weapon or by any living being created by Brahma. Thus, Hiranyakasipu became extremely powerful by the boon of Brahma and enslaved all the Lokapalas (presiding deities of the eight directions of the universe). He became the sole monarch of the three worlds and enjoyed worldly pleasures while occupying Mahendra Bhavana, the residence of Indra. The demigods suffered due to his cruel behaviour and took refuge of Sri Hari. Lord Hari then gave them confidence saying, “When Hiranyakasipu becomes jealous of his devotee-son Prahlada, he will be destroyed.”

Hiranyakasipu had four sons: Samhlada, Anuhlada, Hlada and Prahlada. Of these, Prahlada was the best due to his virtuous qualities. While in his mother’s womb he had heard and assimilated the teachings of Narada Muni. As he was always absorbed in meditation on the Supreme Lord, the peaceful and tranquil-hearted Prahlada could not perceive anything in this world unrelated to God, who is all-good.

As it was the custom in those days to send children to the guru’s home for education, Hiranyakasipu sent Prahlada, who was well versed in ethics, to Nanda and Amarka, the two sons of the demon-guru Sukracarya. Nanda and Amarka lived near the palace. They began to teach politics to Prahlada along with the other demon children. After hearing the teachings of his gurus, Prahlada would always give the expected reply, but in his heart he did not like these teachings. “This is my country, that is another’s country. This is our group, that is another’s group.” Politics is based upon the foundation of this division between “mine and thine.” There can be no politics without this “mine and thine” or “friend and foe” mentality. So, this is the demoniac mentality. Here, the noteworthy thing is that although the highly learned Prahlada understood the futility of the teachings of his teachers, he never behaved in a rude or disrespectful manner, but gave befitting respect to them. If a person respects his parents, teachers, elders, guardians and others senior to himself in age, he is benefited and there remains consistency in the social arrangement. Selfishness and disrespect of elders and seniors will bring disorder everywhere. Prahlada’s character is unique and his every conduct is worth following.

When Prahlada's teachers Nanda and Amarka saw that Prahlada had attained a good education and was answering all their questions properly, they thought it wise to send him to his father, as he would be glad to see Prahlada's educational progress. Hiranyakasipu was happy at the return of Prahlada from his guru's home. He took him on his lap and cordially said, "My dear son Prahlada, tell me whatever you think to be saintly (sadhu)." By this, Hiranyakasipu meant that he wanted Prahlada to tell him some good words from whatever he remembered from his guru's teachings that he could express without difficulty, as he was just a child.

Prahlada understood the intentions of his father, but as the question was put before Prahlada in the royal assembly, he thought that he ought to speak only the truth, which is actually saintly, otherwise the court members would misunderstand him. So he replied, "O emperor of demons, for the corporeal souls who are always perplexed due to the acceptance of perishable things and contact with non-eternal relations, I think it to be saintly to renounce the home which is like a dark well[1], the place of downfall, and to go to the forest to take refuge of and worship the lotus feet of Sri Hari."

Hearing his son's view on the worship of Vishnu, Hiranyakasipu smiled and thought that others must have spoiled the vulnerable intelligence of the child. He sternly ordered the demons to be careful in dealing with Prahlada and to take care lest any Vaishnava come in disguise and spoil his intelligence. After hearing about this order from Hiranyakasipu, Nanda and Amarka became worried. They knew that they had never taught Prahlada about Vishnu-worship, so he must have heard such things from some Vaishnava and spoken about it. If they tried to find out the name of that Vaishnava and tactfully inform the king about it, the king would not doubt them. With this intention, Nanda and Amarka addressed Prahlada in a very pleasing manner and said, "O joy of the demon dynasty, we bless you for the sake of your welfare. You should not tell a lie before your teachers. Speak the truth. We have not taught you about devotion to Vishnu. We have taught you with other demon children but their minds are not spoiled like yours. Did you speak for yourself in that manner, or has somebody spoiled your intelligence?" Prahlada understood the intentions of his teachers. So he first offered pranamas to the Supreme Lord who controls the maya potency that covers the intelligence of the living beings and creates the mentality of "mine and thine." Then he said, "As iron is naturally attracted towards a magnet, my heart is similarly attracted towards the lotus feet of Cakrapani Sri Hari (Sri Hari, the holder of the disc weapon). Sri Hari has spoiled my intelligence."

Prahlada's reply was not what Nanda and Amarka wished to hear. They thought that Prahlada would mention someone's name whom they could catch hold of, so they became angry and condemned Prahlada, "O ruiner of the family, defamer of the demon dynasty, you are like a thorn tree in the sandalwood forest which is the asura dynasty. Using you as an axe, Vishnu will destroy the sandal forest of the demons. Your intelligence is lost. There are four methods of politics, namely sama (conciliation), dana (monetary gratification), bheda (causing dissension) and danda (punishment), and your conscience will not be awakened without using the last method. Someone bring a cane immediately to flog this boy!" Thus, they tried to frighten Prahlada by striking a cane on the table; because Prahlada was the son of the emperor, they lacked the courage to actually beat him. They reproached him hastily but Prahlada remained silent. Again, they began to teach him the scriptures related to dharma, artha and kama (piety, wealth and the fulfilment of desires), and tried to educate him in politics.

After some time, Prahlada's teachers saw that Prahlada had become expert in the four pillars of politics. He properly replied to every question. This time, they themselves would take him to the king. Thinking in this way, they first took Prahlada to see his mother. Prahlada made obeisances to his mother and she bathed him very affectionately and decorated him with various jewels. Then, Prahlada's teachers took him to the royal assembly of King Hiranyakasipu, whereupon Prahlada made prostrated obeisances before his father. Seeing Prahlada, Hiranyakasipu felt great affection for him. He took him on his lap, embraced him, kissed him, and bathed him with tears of happiness. After this, Hiranyakasipu happily inquired, "O son Prahlada, you have taken instruction from your gurus for so long. Now, please tell me something excellent from their teachings." Hiranyakasipu's intention was that Prahlada should speak on what was best from the teachings of Ñanda and Amarka, considering them as gurus. But Prahlada was worried; he thought that if he replied according to his father's wishes, the others present in the court would get the wrong impression about the teachings of a real guru. Ñanda and Amarka were not real gurus (sad-gurus) even though they were family gurus. A guru[2] should be srotriya[3] (well-versed in the sruti or Vedas) and have brahmanishtha (firm devotion to Brahman or God). Prahlada's teachers were learned in sruti but lacked firm devotion to Brahman. They were only devoted to their specific mundane subjects or worldly knowledge, so their teaching was not the instruction of proper gurus. Prahlada decided to speak about the essence of all the lessons he had received from his real guru, Narada, who possessed the two qualities of srotriya and

brahmanishtha, and replied:

“Dedicating oneself to Vishnu and following the nine forms of devotion, with the only object being the propitiation of Vishnu, is the highest form of genuine knowledge.” The nine forms of devotion are, respectively: sravanam (hearing), kirtanam (chanting), smaranam (remembrance of the name, form, attributes, personal associates and pastimes of the Lord), pada-sevanam (service of the lotus feet of the Lord. This also indicates service of the devotees of the Lord), arcanam (worship of the Deity), vandanam (offering prayers and obeisances), dasyam (service of God in the relationship of master and servant), sakhyam (service of God in friendship), and atma-nivedanam (total self-dedication to God).

Upon hearing Prahlada again speak about the worship of Vishnu, Hiranyakasipu thought that he must have learned this from Nanda and Amarka, the sons of his guru, Sukracarya. Thus, he became very angry and condemned them in a rude manner, “O lowest of brahmanas! O evil minded ones! What did you do? You disobeyed me; you adopted the favour of my enemy and taught my son Prahlada about worthless Vishnu-bhakti. A sinful person commits sin secretly but his sin manifests in the form of disease; similarly, a deceptive and wicked-minded person, although living in the form of a friend, ultimately discloses his real form through his deeds.” At this, the guru’s sons said, “O King, you have conquered Indra, and all the Lokapalas are afraid of you. We are but poor brahmanas. We would not dare to act against you. We have not taught Prahlada about devotion to Vishnu and neither has anyone else. Prahlada’s devotion to Vishnu is natural and inborn, so please restrain your anger.” In Satya-yuga, everyone spoke truthfully, so Hiranyakasipu believed his guru’s sons. He asked Prahlada, “O impolite one, O destroyer of the family, how have you become Krishna conscious if your gurus did not teach you in this manner?”

Prahlada replied, “Without the favour of a nishkincana maha-bhagavata (a perfect pure devotee, completely emancipated from worldly concerns), a grihavrata (a person engaged in household affairs) cannot become devoted to Sri Krishna either by himself or by the help of other grihavratas[4].” In other words, Prahlada’s devotion to Sri Krishna was not due to his own efforts or the help of the family guru’s sons. Rather, his devotion to Sri Krishna was due to the favour of nishkincana maha-bhagavata Sri Narada, the devotee of Sri Krishna. Upon hearing this undesirable statement from Prahlada, Hiranyakasipu became blind with rage and threw Prahlada from the throne with such force that any five-year-

old child would have died at once, but the Lord saved him. Prahlada remained patient, steady and peaceful. He did not raise a even finger against his father or use any harsh words. Hiranyakasipu ordered the demons to kill Prahlada. At first, the demons did not wish to kill the king's son, but when Hiranyakasipu repeatedly persuaded them to kill Prahlada by quoting different reasons and maxims, they began to attack the vital parts of Prahlada's body with spears. As Prahlada's mind was fully absorbed in and devoted to the indescribable Supreme Lord of the universe, all the efforts of the demons proved futile. Seeing this, Hiranyakasipu became even more suspicious and tried to kill Prahlada by various methods such as the celestial powerful elephant of the quarters, by serpents and by evil incantations. He tried to kill Prahlada by hurling him from a mountain, by burying him in a deep ditch, by poisoning him, by starvation, by exposure to severe cold and atmospheric pressure, by burning him in a fire and by stoning him. But when all efforts proved to be in vain, he began to think that the power of the child was immeasurable. Prahlada was not afraid of anything! Hiranyakasipu began to think that Prahlada was immortal, and worried that he himself might die if he opposed him. Thus, Hiranyakasipu sat down with his head hung low.

Seeing Hiranyakasipu dejected, Nanda and Amarka tried to console him by saying, "O King, you have conquered the three worlds single-handedly and all the Lokapalas are afraid of you. Therefore, you need not worry. Besides, one should not pay attention to the virtues and defects of a mere child."

They suggested to him, "Until guru Sukracarya returns, Prahlada should be kept on an island so that he might not run away out of fear. Growing up with the acarya, serving the acarya and learning from the acarya will purify his intelligence." Hiranyakasipu accepted the proposal of both the guru's sons and told them to instruct the boy in the piety and charity suitable for a king. They carefully took Prahlada and the other demon children to an island. There, they began to teach him about dharma, artha and kama-material religiosity, economic development and sense gratification. One day, the teachers went to their homes to do some work. When the children came to know about their teacher's departure, they thought it a good chance to play. Prahlada's school friends called him out to play, but the highly learned Prahlada told them that he wished to say something to them, so they all changed their play-dress and gathered around Prahlada. Though all the children were of the same age as Prahlada, they had great respect and affection for him. Prahlada told the children about the duties of human beings: "The human birth is very rare and valuable because in such a

birth one can realise the Supreme Lord. After realising Him, no material desires will remain. But this golden chance is not permanent because life is momentary. So, wise persons will follow bhagavata-dharma from their childhood and worship the Lord by hearing and chanting His glories. The thought that 'I will perform devotional practices later on' is not good. If the mind becomes attached to money, wife, son and relatives, then devotion will be difficult. If you do not devote yourself to the Lord's worship now, many difficulties and problems will interfere with prayer later on." Prahlada discussed all these things in detail, enabling the children to understand. In order to gain their confidence, he related to them everything about how he had received the message of Krishna-bhajana from Narada while in his mother's womb. The demon children heard Prahlada's teachings, and thinking them to be superior ideas, accepted them, thereby rejecting the teachings of their materialistic gurus.

Due to Prahlada's influence, the minds of the demon children became fixed on the Supreme Lord. The anxious brahmanas Nanda and Amarka immediately went to the demon king to explain the situation. Hearing this implacable message, Hiranyakasipu became extremely angry. With harsh words, he condemned the young Prahlada who was standing politely with folded hands: "O impolite, dull-headed one! You are disobeying my rule. I shall send you to the abode of Yama right now. Even the Lokapalas are afraid of my anger. Why are you not afraid of me? Who has given you this strength?"

Prahlada replied, "Strength only comes from the one Supreme Lord, Sri Hari. Everyone gets their strength from Him. No one is our enemy except the uncontrolled mind. You should give up these demoniac thoughts of 'friend and foe.' In ancient times, foolish persons like you had the false pride that they had conquered the earth, but they could not even conquer the six passions residing in their own bodies. Those who have conquered the mind see no one as their enemy. Only the ignorant believe others to be their enemy." By these words of Prahlada, Hiranyakasipu became more and more enraged and shouted, "O unintelligent fool! You condemn me and boast about conquering the six inherent cardinal passions of man. Certainly you want to die! You rascal, there is no Lord in the world other than me. If there is, then where is He?"

"Father, He is everywhere," said Prahlada.

"Then why do I not see Him in this pillar?" retorted Hiranyakasipu.

“I see Him even in this pillar,” replied Prahlada.

The very powerful Hiranyakasipu condemned Prahlada with extreme anger and harsh words. “May your Lord save you!” Saying these words, he picked up his sword, rose from his throne and violently struck the pillar with his fist. As the pillar was struck, it emitted a terrible sound as if the whole universe was being shattered. Brahma and the other demigods were afraid of this unique, terrifying sound and Hiranyakasipu himself began to search out its source. Then, in order to prove correct the words of both his devotee Prahlada and Lord Brahma, the Supreme Lord appeared in a wonderful half-human and half-lion form called Nrisimha. Even though the Lord appeared before his very eyes, Hiranyakasipu still could not understand Him as the Lord; he saw Him as a strange creature. Without pure devotional eyes, one cannot see the Lord.

The terrible form of Lord Nrisimha is described in the Bhagavatam as follows: Both His eyes were full of anger and shining like molten gold, and His angry face was full of matted hairs and mane. He had terrible teeth, a sharp tongue like a razor’s edge, stretched eyebrows and raised ears, with a mouth and nose like the caves of a mountain. He had terrible divided jaws, His body was touching the sky, His neck was thick and short, His thighs and chest were broad and His stomach was thin. His body was covered with white hair and He had hundreds of arms and nails. Even though Hiranyakasipu understood this unique Nrisimha Deity to be the cause of his death, he became ready to fight and struck the body of the Lord with his mace. Lord Nrisimhadeva play-acted the battle for some time and then, neither in the daytime nor at night but at dusk, neither inside the house nor outside but on the threshold, neither in the sky nor on the ground but on His lap, and without any weapon but His nails, He tore open Hiranyakasipu’s chest and wore his intestines as a garland. The Lord also killed thousands of other demons with just His nails. After this, Lord Nrisimhadeva exhibited the triumphant behaviour of a conqueror. He left Hiranyakasipu and sat on the throne in the middle of the royal assembly in His angry form. Witnessing this terrible form of the Lord, no one could gather the courage to approach and serve Him, even though they were all ecstatic due to the demise of the cruel king. Brahma, Rudra, Indra, the Rshis, Vidyadharas, Nagas, Manus, Prajapatis, Gandharvas, Caranas, Yakshas, Kimpurushas, Vaitalikas, Kinnaras, Vishnu-parshadas and others, all prayed to Lord Nrisimha from a distance.

Although Brahma prayed to Lakshmi to go to Sri Nrisimhadeva to allay His anger, She could not go before this terrible never-before-seen Deity. Then

Brahma asked Prahlada to go and pacify the anger of Nrisimhadeva. The reason for this was that this terrible and angry form of the Lord had appeared only due to the torture of bhakta Prahlada. Prahlada made obeisances to Sri Lakshmi, Brahma and the other demigods. Then he went to Nrisimhadeva and fell down at His lotus feet. Nrisimhadeva, being in the mood of parental affection, put his lotus hand on Prahlada's forehead so that all of Prahlada's defects, which were due to having been born in a demon dynasty, were removed. Transcendental knowledge was revealed in his heart and, overwhelmed with ecstatic devotion, he began to offer prayers to Sri Nrisimhadeva.

Satiated by the prayers of Prahlada, Nrisimhadeva wished to grant a boon to him, but Prahlada had no desire of taking any boon. The reason is that the person who serves the Lord with the desire for worldly pleasures or for the Lord's blessings to get worldly benefit is not an actual servitor but a trader. Then Nrisimhadeva said that if He did not give Prahlada a boon, His designation as Varadarshabha, the Supreme Conferrer of boons, would be defamed. So Prahlada replied, "O Lord, if You wish to grant me a boon, please grant me the boon that there may not be any desire in my heart to ask a boon from You."

Nrisimhadeva replied, "This cannot be accepted as your prayer for a boon because you have deceived Me."

Prahlada then submitted this prayer to Nrisimhadeva: "My father struck Your holy body with his mace and he behaved maliciously with me because I worship You. Kindly purify him."

Nrisimhadeva said to Prahlada, "Your father has seen Me and received My touch. Did this not purify him? O Prahlada, do you think the dynasty in which you have taken birth is still impure? Along with you, twenty-one of your ancestral generations have become purified."

trih-saptabhih pita putah pitribhih saha te 'nagha
yat sadho 'sya kule jato bhavan vai kula-pavanah
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 7.10.18)

"O sinless one, O sadhu, Your father has become pure along with twenty-one forefathers. The reason for this is that having taken birth in their dynasty, you have become the purifier of that dynasty."

Sri Nrisimhadeva has two dispositions. He is terrible with non-devotees, but with devotees, He is very affectionate and caring.
The following verse from the agamas is quoted as evidence by Sridhara Svami in his commentary on Srimad-Bhagavatam 7.9.1:

ugro 'py anugra evayam sva-bhaktanam nri-kesari
kesariva sva-potanam anyesham ugra-vikramah
(Caitanya-caritamrita, Madhya 8.6)

"Although very ferocious, the lioness is very kind to her cubs. Similarly, although very ferocious to non-devotees like Hiranyakasipu, Lord Nrisimhadeva is very affectionate and kind to devotees like Prahlada Maharaja."
(Bhaktivinoda Thakura)

This expresses thoroughly the glories of Sri Nrisimhadeva's unique mercy. Devotion to Nrisimhadeva enhances bhakti and destroys uncongenial adverse motivations.
The meaning of the word Hiranyakasipu is --- hiranya: gold or money, kasipu: bed, i.e. desire for money and women. The desire for name and fame also goes together with them. These are obstructions to devotion. Nrisimhadeva destroys the anti-devotional feelings of the Hiranyakasipu-like mentality of the living beings and nourishes the devotional attitude like that of Prahlada.

So, the favour of Bhakti-vighna-vinasana Sri Nrisimhadeva (Nrisimhadeva, the destroyer of hindrances to bhakti) is very necessary for neophyte devotees who have the weakness of non-eternal propensities.

The next two verses were composed by Sridhara Svami in his commentary on Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.1.1 and 10.87.1 respectively:

prahlada-hridayahladam bhaktavidya-vidaranam
sarad-indu-rucim vande parindra-vadanam harim

"Let me offer my obeisances unto the Supreme lion-faced Lord Sri Hari who is residing within the heart of Prahlada Maharaja as condensed bliss, and who always removes nescience. His effulgence is like autumnal moonshine."

vag-isa yasya vadane lakshmir yasya ca vakshasi
yasyaste hridaye samvit tam nrisimham aham bhaje

“On whose lips Sarasvati (the goddess of learning) dances, on whose chest Lakshmidevi resides in the form of a golden line and whose heart is the abode of grand refulgence of the opulence of Absolute Knowledge-I offer my obeisances unto that very object of worship, Sri Nrisimhadeva.”

ito nrisimhah parato nrisimho yato yato yami tato nrisimhah
bahir nrisimho hridaye nrisimho nrisimham adim saranam prapadye
(Nrisimha Purana, quoted in Caitanya-caritamrita, Antya 16.53)

“Lord Nrisimha is on this side and Lord Nrisimha is on that side. Wherever I go, Nrisimha is there. Nrisimha is outside and Nrisimha is also in my heart. I take shelter of that first appearance of Sri Nrisimha.”

namas te nara-simhaya prahladahlada-dayine
hiranyakasipor vakshah-sila-tanka-nakhalaye
(Nrisimha Purana, quoted in Caitanya-caritamrita, Antya 16.52)

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto Lord Nrisimha who is the giver of bliss to Prahlada, and who possesses nails to tear the stone-like chest of Hiranyakasipu.”

tava kara-kamala-vare nakham adbhuta-sringam
dalita-hiranyakasipu-tanu-bhringam
kesava dhrita-narahari-rupa jaya jagadisa hare
(Sri Jayadeva’s Dasavatara-stotra, 4th Verse)

“O Kesava! O Lord Hari, You have assumed the form of half-man and half-lion! The lotus flower is very soft, but Your most beautiful lotus-like nails are astonishing. The body of the mountain peak-like demon, Hiranyakasipu, has been ripped apart by them because they are also so hard. O Lord of the universe! All glories unto You!”

Regarding this subject, it is written in the Harivamsa Purana as follows: In Satya-yuga, Hiranyakasipu, the ancestor of the demons, was engaged in severe penances and demanded the boon from Brahma that he would not be killed by any demigods, demons, Gandharvas, serpents, Rakshasas or men. He asked that sages would not be able to curse him, that weapons, mountains, trees, wet or dry things would not be able to destroy him, that he would not die in heaven or on any other planet, either in the daytime or at night. Brahma granted him these

boons saying, “So be it!” By achieving these boons, Hiranyakasipu became very excited. He became the ruler of heaven and began to torture and abuse the demigods in various ways. Unable to bear this torture, the demigods went to take shelter of Lord Vishnu, who, giving them assurance of protection said, “I am very soon going to destroy that demon who is proud of his boon, along with all his followers.” Bidding farewell to the demigods, Lord Vishnu began to consider how He would kill Hiranyakasipu and went off to the Himalayas. At last, He decided that He would assume the form of Nrisimha who would terrify all the demons (Daityas, Danavas and Rakshasas). He then assumed the form of half-man and half-lion. His luster began to rob the sun of its radiance. In this form, Lord Vishnu gradually approached the place where the demon king, Hiranyakasipu, was sitting in an excellent assembly accompanied by the demigods, Gandharvas and Apsaras (celestial nymphs) who were playing music with perfect rhythm.
Being present in that assembly, the Lord looked at Hiranyakasipu again and again. At that time, Hiranyakasipu’s son Prahlada saw that Divine Form for a moment with spiritual vision, and addressed the demon king as follows: “O King, you are the chief of the demons. On seeing this Divine Form, it appears as though this is an inexpressible, divine influencing personality. Our demoniac dynasty will be destroyed by it. All immovable and moveable objects seem to exist in the body of this great person. He is some special personality.”

Hearing Prahlada’s statement, the demon king ordered his demon followers, “Kill this Lion immediately!” The demons attacked the Lion with all their might but they were soon destroyed along with their retinue. Nrisimhadeva then opened His mouth. His terrible roaring appeared like the sound of annihilation, and He easily destroyed the entire demon assembly. Then Hiranyakasipu himself began to shower dreadful weapons on Him. Both began a terrible fight.

The demons attacked Lord Vishnu, but they themselves were killed by Him. Ablaze with anger, Hiranyakasipu appeared to burn everything with his bloodshot eyes. The earth began to shiver, the oceans became perturbed and all the forests and mountains became restless. There was darkness everywhere; nothing was visible. Terrible disturbances took place and fearful winds began to blow. The symptoms of universal annihilation began to appear. Being lusterless and dark, the sun began to emit terrible smoke. Even the seven suns assumed forms of darkness and rose in the sky. Meteors fell in quick succession from the heavens.

Greatly enraged, Hiranyakasipu bit his lips with his teeth and ran to fight, taking his mace in hand. Upon seeing this, all the demigods became frightened. They went to Nrisimhadeva and said, “O Lord, destroy this wicked Hiranyakasipu with his followers. There is no one in this world who can kill him. Therefore, O Lord, kindly kill him for the benefit of the world and establish peace in all the three worlds.”

Hearing the prayer of the demigods, Nrisimhadeva began to make grave sounds. He leapt up and tore out the heart of the demon with his sharp nails and knocked him down on the battleground. When the horrible enemy-the demon king, fell down dead on the ground, all the people of the earth, moon, sun, planets, stars, rivers and mountains-one and all, were pleased. The demigods unitedly began to recite hymns to propitiate Nrisimhadeva. Celestial nymphs began to dance and sing. After the dancing and singing had ended, the Supreme Lord Narayana, who wears the symbol of Garuda on His flag, gave up His form of Nrisimha and assumed His own form. He then stepped onto an eight-wheeled excellently illuminated chariot, and set out for His place on the northern shore of the Ocean of Milk. In this way, Nrisimhadeva destroyed the demon, Hiranyakasipu.

The Glories of Observing Sri Nrisimha-caturdasi-vrata

vaisakhasya caturdasyam suklayam sri nrikesari
jatas tad asyam tatpujot-savam kurvita savratam
(Padma Purana)

“Sri Nrisimhadeva appeared on the fourteenth lunar day (Caturdasi-tithi) of the bright fortnight of the month of Vaisakha. So, on this day, it is proper to worship and celebrate the appearance of Nrisimhadeva by following the rules of fasting and others.”

prahlada-klesa nasaya ya hi punya caturdasi
pujayet tatra yatnenahareh prahladam agratah

(from the agamas)

“It is proper to first worship Prahlada before worshipping Nrisimha because the holy fourteenth lunar day of the bright fortnight has appeared in order to remove the distress of Prahlada.”

It is written in the Brihan-narasimha Purana as follows: Prahlada Maharaja desired to know from Sri Nrisimhadeva how he had developed devotion to His lotus feet. Nrisimhadeva replied, “In ancient times, there lived a brahmana named Vasu Sarma in the city of Avanti, who was well-versed in the Vedas. His good wife Susila was famous throughout the three worlds for her virtuous conduct and ideal devotion to her husband. Vasu Sarma fathered five sons in Susila’s womb. His first four sons were learned persons of good conduct and devoted to their father. But you, the youngest son, became attracted to a prostitute and lost your character. You were then known as Vasudeva. Your virtuous conduct was destroyed in the company of that prostitute. Due to a quarrel with the prostitute, on the Nrisimha-caturdasi-tithi both of you stayed awake throughout the night and unknowingly observed a fast. Therefore, both of you obtained the fruits of observing Nrisimha-caturdasi-vrata. The prostitute enjoyed as an Apsara in various ways in heaven and then became My favourite. As the son of Hiranyakasipu, you also took birth as My dear devotee. By observing this fast, Brahma has obtained the power of creation and Mahesvara has obtained the power of destruction of the three worlds. Other people also achieve all kinds of power and perform observance of this vow to fulfil all their desired objectives.”
In his Laghu-bhagavatamrita, Srila Rupa Gosvami has written about the pre-eminence of the Lord’s appearance as Sri Nrisimhadeva, quoting the following reference from Sri Padma Purana:

nrisimha-rama-krishneshu sad-gunyam paripuritam
paravasthas tu te tasya dipad utpanna-dipa-vat
(Padma Purana)

“Nrisimha, Rama and Krishna possess the pre-eminent presence of the totality of sixty attributes. Just as one lamp lights other lamps and then all lamps follow the same nature, similarly, although Rama and Nrisimha are manifested forms from the Prime Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, all three hold the supreme position with sixty attributes.”

Footnotes

[1] A well without water is known as a dark well. No man goes to such a waterless well, for if someone falls into that well, his rescue is very unlikely. Similarly, the house in which sadhus are not received cordially and in which, being deprived of the association of sadhus, the residents are engaged in sense enjoyment, is like a dark well. There is no possibility of rescue for the residents of such a house. Therefore, such a place of downfall of the corporeal soul (like falling into a dark well) is to be abandoned.

[2] The qualities of a guru:

tad-vijnanartham sa gurum evabhigacchet
samit-panih shrotriyam brahma-nishöham
(Munòaka Upanishad 1.2.12)

“To learn transcendental subject matter, one must humbly approach, with firewood in hand, a spiritual master who is learned in the Vedas and firmly devoted to the Absolute Truth.”

tasmad gurum prapadyeta jijnasuh shreya uttamam
shabde pare ca nishnatam brahmany upashamashrayam
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 11.3.21)

“Therefore, anyone who seriously desires real happiness must seek a bona fide spiritual master and take shelter of him by initiation. The qualification of the bona fide guru is that he has realised the conclusions of the scriptures by deliberation and is able to convince others of these conclusions. Such great personalities who have taken shelter of the Supreme Lord, leaving aside all material considerations, should be understood to be bona fide spiritual masters.”

[3] Srotriya has two interpretations: (1) well-versed in the Vedas, and (2) ontological divine knowledge received through the preceptorial channel.

[4] Grihavrata: One who moves around the house or property, i.e., one who engages his sense organs and energy for the sake of material property and consequently becomes attached to it.

However, saints also remain in a house, so it is said that the house also signifies

the wife and material life. One who moves around the wife or family, or engages the senses and energy for them, is considered a grihavrata.

The real self is the atma (soul), so the gross and subtle bodies are also like houses. One who devotes his energy for the gross and subtle bodies is also a grihavrata.

Since all grihavratas are embodied souls, by the unrestricted use of the sense organs they will all enter into nescience and into the inferno of material life. Six billion such enslaved corporeal souls of the world cannot rescue even a single person from the shackles of worldly bondage. A perfect emancipated realised soul can rescue the whole world or universe --- but such realised souls are very rare. If one wants quality, one must sacrifice quantity. It is impossible to get both at the same time.

---from "Dasavatara - The Ten Manifestations of God"

Sri Parasurama-avatara

Lord Parasurama is the sixth avatara of the Dasavatara. Of the twenty-five lila-avataras, Bhargava Parasurama is the nineteenth. In the Sri Caitanya-caritamrita, Madhya-lila 20.246 Anubhashya commentary of Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Thakura, Parasurama has been enumerated as one of the saktyavesa-avataras (a descent of the Lord’s extraordinary power). Parasurama is the manifested form of the power to suppress miscreants. Brahma, Siva and other demigods and sages such as Narada and so on, offered prayers to Sri Krishna after He had entered into the womb of Devaki. In those prayers, Lord Parasurama has been referred to as an avatara of Sri Krishna:

matsyasva-kacchapa-nrisimha-varaha-hamsa-
rajanya-vipra-vibudheshu kritavatarah

tvam pasi nas tri-bhuvanam ca yathadhunesa
bharam bhuvo hara yaduttama vandanam te
(srimad-bhagavatam 10.2.40)

"O Supreme Lord, in your previous avataras when you appeared as a fish (matsya), a horse (hayagriva-horse-necked), a tortoise (kurma), half man and half lion (nrisimhadeva), a boar (varaha), a swan (hamsa), a kshatriya (dasarathi lord ramacandra-the son of dasaratha maharaja and also as parasurama) and a brahmana-a learned sage among the demigods (vamanadeva), you protected and maintained us and the three worlds. o chief of the yadavas, we respectfully submit our prayer unto you. O Supreme Lord! Please now, while also removing the burdens of this world, kindly maintain us." (Bhaktivinoda Thakura)

rajanyah kshatriyah-ramacandra o parasurama
avatare shodasame
pasyan brahma-druho nripan
trih-sapta-kritvah kupito
nih-kshatram akaron mahim
(srimad-bhagavatam 1.3.20)

"Lord Vishnu appeared as parasurama, the sixteenth avatara, and freed the earth from the kshatriyas (the courageous valiant class who have the capacity to control the wicked and protect the virtuous) twenty-one times, as he was angry with them because of their rebellion against the brahmanas (the highest class endowed with comprehensive wisdom who give impartial advice to the kshatriyas to help them rule)."

In response to questions of the sages headed by Saunaka, Srila Suta Gosvami has described the pastimes of twenty-two avataras of which Parasurama is the sixteenth. In Srimad-Bhagavatam, 9th Canto, Chapters 15 and 16, Sri Vedavyasa Muni has described the pastimes of Parasurama as follows:

Lord Brahma was born from the lotus that sprouted from the navel of Garbhodakasayi Vishnu. Brahma had a son named Atri and Atri's son was Soma (Candra). The son of Candra was Budha. Pururava was born from Budha and his wife, Ila. Jahnu Muni appeared in the dynasty of Pururava, otherwise known as the Aila lineage, and Kusa was then born as a descendant of Jahnu. From Kusa came Kusambu and from Kusambu, Gadhi was born. Gadhi had a daughter named Satyavati. A brahmana sage named Ricika desired to marry Gadhi's

daughter Satyavati. However, in dowry, Gadhi demanded one thousand horses with special characteristics. The horses were to shine like the moon and one ear, left or right, was to be black in colour. Ricika Muni brought one thousand such horses from the demigod Varuna, gave them to Gadhi and then married Satyavati.

Once, Satyavati and her mother both desired sons, and therefore requested Ricika Muni to prepare an oblation (caru-a special preparation of rice, milk and sugar boiled together) for them. Ricika Muni prepared two oblations, one to obtain a brahmana son from the womb of his wife and another for a kshatriya son from the womb of Gadhi's wife, and then gave the oblations to them. The sage then went out to bathe. Meanwhile, Satyavati's mother thought that since a husband naturally has more affection for his wife, the oblation that Ricika had prepared for Satyavati must be better. So, she asked her daughter for the oblation that had been prepared for her, while Satyavati took the oblation prepared for her mother. When Ricika Muni returned after bathing and found out what had happened, he said with dissatisfaction, "Satyavati's son will be a kshatriya holding a staff signifying the infliction of punishment and Satyavati's mother's son will be brahma-tattvavid-a knower of the ontological true nature of Brahman." Later, upon the humble request of Satyavati, Ricika Muni said, "All right, instead of your son being born as a kshatriya, your grandson will be a kshatriya." Jamadagni was then born from the womb of Satyavati. He married Renuka, the daughter of Renu, and among the sons of Jamadagni, his youngest son became famous as Parasurama.

yam ahur vasudevamsam
haihayanam kulantakam
trih-sapta-kritvo ya imam
cakre nihkshatriyam mahim
(srimad-bhagavatam 9.15.14)

"Learned scholars accept this parasurama as the celebrated avatara of vasudeva who annihilated the dynasty of karttavirya and killed all the kshatriyas on earth twenty-one times."

Karttaviryarjuna, chief of the dynasty of the Haihayas, obtained ample power and opulence by worshipping Dattatreya and became a mighty king. Such was the unsurpassed power of Karttaviryarjuna that once while touring to gain victory over the whole world (dig-vijaya), he came across the warrior Ravana

worshipping the demigods on the banks of the Narmada River. Disturbed by the water turbulence caused by Karttaviryarjuna, he became enraged and attempted to punish Karttaviryarjuna. However, he lost the battle in a very dramatic way and ended up tied like a monkey. Later on, Karttaviryarjuna released Ravana upon seeing how weak and powerless he was.

One day, Karttaviryarjuna went out hunting and while wandering, arrived at the asrama of Jamadagni, the sage of the demigods. Jamadagni Muni received the king respectfully and, with the help of the kamadhenu (the fabulous cow that grants all wishes), provided the king, his soldiers, ministers and servants, with food and other supplies to their full satisfaction. Upon seeing that the kamadhenu's opulence was greater than his, the king desired to possess her. He forcibly took Jamadagni's cow used for performing agnihotras and set off for his capital, Mahishmati, on the banks of the Narmada River. Jamadagni felt sad on hearing the pitiable cries of the kamadhenu being kidnapped along with her calf. When Lord Parasurama heard this, He became very angry and taking up His bow, attacked Karttaviryarjuna just as a lion attacks an elephant. As Karttaviryarjuna was about to enter his capital, Mahishmatipura, he saw a furious man with matted locks of hair, wearing a black deerskin, His face shining like the sun and holding a bow and arrows, an axe (parasu) and other weapons, coming after him with great speed. Being fearful, he sent seventeen akshauhinis constituted of many elephants, horses, chariots and infantry soldiers equipped with clubs, arrows and many other weapons, to check Lord Parasurama. But Lord Parasurama alone killed all the soldiers, elephants and horses.

Lord Parasurama sliced the enemy army with strokes of His chopper at the speed of mind. The battlefield became wet with the blood of the soldiers. Upon seeing this, Karttaviryarjuna came onto the battlefield and with his one thousand arms, simultaneously released five hundred arrows. However, using His bow, Lord Parasurama immediately destroyed all the king's bows and quivers. Seeing his weapons cut to pieces, Karttaviryarjuna uprooted many trees and hills and began to fight. Parasurama first used His axe to cut off Karttaviryarjuna's arms and then decapitated him like a mountain peak. When Karttaviryarjuna's ten thousand sons saw their father killed, they all fled in fear. Lord Parasurama brought the cow of agnihotra back and gave her to His father Jamadagni. Upon hearing about the death of Karttaviryarjuna, Jamadagni sadly spoke to his son as follows:

"O mighty-armed Rama! You have committed a sin by killing the king who is

the embodiment of the demigods. We are brahmanas and because they possess the quality of forgiveness brahmanas are worshipped by everyone. It is only due to this quality of forgiveness that Lord Brahma, the supreme spiritual master of this universe, has achieved his position. The Supreme Lord is quickly pleased with those who are forgiving. The killing of an emperor is a greater sin than the killing of a brahmana. You should atone for this sin by surrendering Yourself to Sri Acyuta, Sri Krishna, and by worshipping the holy places." Accepting His father's order, Lord Parasurama travelled to the holy places for one year before returning to the asrama.

Once, upon the instruction of Jamadagni, his wife Renuka went to the Ganges to get some water. There, she saw that Apsaras (celestial women) were sporting with the king of the Gandharvas, Padmamali (Citraratha). Upon seeing their sporting, fleeting thoughts of desire for his association appeared in her mind. She became bewildered and failed to remember that the time for her husband's fire sacrifice was passing. When she came back to her senses, she realised her mistake. Fearful of the sage's curse, she stood near her husband with folded hands. The great sage understood the adultery in the mind of his wife and ordered his sons to kill her. However, his sons refused to carry out his order. Jamadagni then instructed his youngest son, Parasurama, to kill His mother Renuka and His brothers who had disobeyed his order. Lord Parasurama, knowing the power of His father, thought that if He refused to carry out His father's order He would be cursed, but if He carried out the order, His father would be pleased and would give Him a benediction. He would then be able to bring His mother and brothers back to life with that benediction. Parasurama therefore killed His own mother and brothers. When Jamadagni, being very pleased, offered to give Him a benediction, Lord Parasurama requested that His mother and brothers be brought back to life and that they would not remember having been killed by Him. His mother and brothers immediately came to life as if awakened from sound sleep. Lord Parasurama was fully aware of His father's power of austerity and had therefore decided to kill His family members.

Although the sons of Karttaviryarjuna ran away to save their lives, they did not forget the killing of their father, and a desire for revenge awakened in them. One day when Parasurama was out in the forest with His brothers, the sons of Karttaviryarjuna took the opportunity to enter into Jamadagni's asrama. In spite of the pitiful prayers of Renuka, they cruelly killed Jamadagni while he was meditating upon the Supreme Lord, and ran away with his head. Hearing the distressed cry of His mother, Parasurama hastily returned to the asrama and

lamented for sometime upon seeing His dead father. Then, entrusting the dead body to His brothers, He decided to put an end to all the kshatriyas of the world. Lord Parasurama went to Mahishmati, which was already doomed because of the sinful killing of a brahmana. Killing the sons of Karttaviryarjuna, Parasurama created a mountain of their heads. With the blood of Karttaviryarjuna's sons who were hostile to brahmanas, a ghastly river was created.

In this way, Lord Parasurama freed the earth from the kshatriya class twenty-one times. In the place known as Samanta-pancaka, nine lakes were created with their blood. Parasurama joined His father Jamadagni's head to his body and placed it upon kusa grass. He then worshipped Lord Vasudeva who is all-pervading and identical with the Vedas, by performing sacrifices. Upon completion of the sacrifice, Lord Parasurama gave the eastern direction to the hota (the priest who performs the sacrifice), the south to Lord Brahma, the west to the adhvaryu (the priest conversant with Yajurveda), the north to the udgata (reciter of the prayers of the Samaveda) and the four corners of isana, agni, nairita and vayu (northeast, southeast, southwest and northwest) to the other priests as an honorarium. He gave the middle portion (madhya-desa) to Kasyapa, the place known as Aryavartta to the upadrashta (advisors or preceptors) and the remaining portion of the world to the other participants of the sacrifice.

At the end of the sacrificial performance, Lord Parasurama cleansed Himself of all sins in the water of His bath. Standing on the bank of the river Sarasvati, He appeared like the bright sun in a clear, cloudless sky. Thus Jamadagni, being worshipped by Lord Parasurama, regained his own body, and became the prominent Seventh Sage in the Rshi-mandala (assembly of sages-the constellation of Ursa Major).

jamadagnyo 'pi bhagavan
ramah kamala-locanah
agaminy antare rajan
vartayishyati vai brihat
aste 'dyapi mahendradau
nyasta-dandah prasanta-dhih
upagiyamana-caritah
siddha-gandharva-caranaih

evam bhrigushu visvatma
bhagavan harir isvarah

avatirya param bharam
bhuvo 'han bahuso nripan
(srimad-bhagavatam 9.16.25-27)

“In the next manvantara, the lotus-eyed Personality of Godhead, Lord Parasurama, the son of Jamadagni, will be a propounder of Vedic knowledge and will become one of the Seven Sages.”

Having given up the task of punishing and killing the kshatriyas, Lord Parasurama still lives at Mahendra Mountain in tranquility. The Siddhas, Gandharvas and Caranas-different classes of demigods, always sing of His exalted holy character and activities. In this way, the Supreme Spirit of the universe, Controller Sri Hari, descended in the Bhrigu dynasty and freed the earth from the burden of undesirable kings by killing them.

The character and activities of Parasurama have been described in the Santi and Vana Parvas of the Mahabharata. In the Vana Parva, Ricika is mentioned as the son of Bhrigu. There, it is written that Bhrigu gave the oblation to Satyavati and her mother. Satyavati’s son, Jamadagni, married King Prasanejita’s daughter Renuka. Renuka gave birth to five sons of which Lord Parasurama was the youngest. The five sons were Rumanvana, Sushena, Vasu, Visvavasu and the youngest, Parasurama. According to another opinion, they were Vasu, Visvavasu, Brihadbhanu, Brihatkanva and Rama. Lord Parasurama satisfied Lord Mahadeva on Gandhamadana Mountain and by his benediction, received a very dazzling parasu (chopper) weapon. Therefore, His name became Parasurama: ‘pasuna kutharakhyasastrena ramah ramanam yasya’.

The sage Vasishtha’s asrama was burned by fire produced from the arrow of Karttaviryarjuna. The sage cursed him that Parasurama, the son of Jamadagni, would cut off his one thousand arms. After ridding the world of the kshatriya race twenty-one times, Parasurama then stopped killing kshatriyas on the prohibition of His grandfather Ricika. Parasurama’s other names are Jamadagnya, Parsurama, Parasuramaka, Bhargava, Bhrigupati and Bhrigulapati.

Parasurama’s character and activities have been described in the Vishnu, Matsya and Kalika Puranas as well as Sahyadrikhanda. In these scriptures, there are some differences from the above-mentioned description. It is said there that due to the sin of killing His mother, the parasu became joined to Parasurama’s hand and He had to go to Kailasa to perform austerities in order to remove the sin.

Due to this He became known as Parasurama.

The following pastime of Parasurama has been described in the Adi-kanda of Ramayana:

After breaking Lord Siva’s bow, Lord Ramacandra was returning to Ayodhya with His father and absolute counterpart internal potency, Sita, when He was confronted and challenged by Parasurama. He said to Sri Rama, “You have broken the Hara-dhanu (bow of Lord Siva). Upon hearing this, I have brought another bow. This bow is called Vaishnava-dhanu. This is in no way inferior to Siva’s bow. My grandfather Ricika received this bow from Vishnu, My father received it from My grandfather and I have received it from My father. If You are able to string this bow then I shall (dvandva yuddha) fight with You.”

Lord Ramacandra held the bow and said, “I can annihilate all opponents with this. Tell Me whether I should destroy all the planets that You have acquired by Your penance or if I should arrest Your movement in the sky?”

Becoming totally powerless and bewildered, Jamadagnya Parasurama said, “I have given the whole earth in charity to Kasyapa Rishi. Since then, I do not stay on the earth at night. Therefore, please do not stop My movement. You may destroy all the planets acquired by My penance.” Sri Ramacandra then destroyed all the planets acquired by Parasurama. After being worshipped in this way by Lord Ramacandra, Jamadagnya set off for Mahendra Mountain.

In the Bhakti-ratnakara of Sri Narahari Chakravarti Öhakura, Parasurama’s residence is mentioned as being in Kamyakavana (Kamyavana-one of the twelve forests of Vraja-mandala). It also mentions that Mahaprabhu set His lotus feet at the birthplace of Parasurama in Renuka village at Agravana, just before His arrival at Gokula (Vraja-mandala), during his travelling from Prayag.

parasurama - sthiti-sthana karaha darsana
etha simhasane basilena narayana
(bhakti ratnakara 5.876)

“Take darsana of Parasurama’s holy place of residence. Here, Narayana sat on His throne.”

prayaga haite krame asi agravane

ailena sighra jamadagnira asrame
tanra bharya renuka, 'renuka' name grama
yatha janma labhilena sri parasurama

renuka haite sighra 'rajagrama' diya
ei vrikshatale rahe gokule asiya
(bhakti ratnakara 5.1793-95)

"Gradually coming to Agravana from Prayag, Caitanyadeva swiftly arrived at Jamadagni's asrama. That village is named after Jamadagni's wife Renuka, and Parasurama was born there. From Renuka, Caitanyadeva left without delay for Rajagrama and rested under this tree in Gokula."

kshatriya-rudhira-maye jagad-apagata-papam
snapayasi payasi samita-bhava-tapam
kesava dhrita-bhrigupati-rupa jaya jagadisa hare
(sri jayadeva's dasavatara-stotra, 6th verse)

"O Kesava! You have assumed the form of Bhrigupati (Parasurama)! By bathing the earth in rivers of blood from the bodies of the demoniac kshatriyas You slew, You washed away the sins of the world. O Lord of the universe! O Lord Hari! All glories unto You!"

Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi

vrishabhanutaya khyatah pura yo vraja-mandale
adhuna pundarikaksho vidyanidhi-mahashayah
svakiya-bhavam asvadya radha-viraha-katarah
caitanyah pundarikaksham aye tatavadat svayam
prema-nidhitaya khyatim gauro yasmai dadau sukhi
madhavendrasya shishyatvat gauravam ca sadakarot

tat-prakasha-vishesho'pi mishrah shri-madhavo matah
ratnavati tu tat-patni kirtida kirtita budhaih

He who was previously known in Vraja as Vrishabhanu, is known here as Sri Pundarikaksha Vidyanidhi. When Mahaprabhu was in his own mood as Krishna and felt the pain of separation from Radha, he would call him "father!". Gaurachandra was happy with Pundarika and named him Premanidhi, or "the treasure house of love". Mahaprabhu always treated him with respect because he was the disciple of Madhavendra Puri. Madhava Mishra is said to be his expansion and his wife Ratnavati was Kirtida in Vraja. (Gaura-ganoddesha-dipika 54)

Pundarika Vidyanidhi's father was named Banesvara and his mother, Ganga Devi. He was born on Vasanta-païcami, the fifth day of the waxing moon in the month of Magh in Chakrashala in Chittagong. His home, or Sripat, used to stand in the village of Mekhala which is two miles east of the Hat Hajari police station, about twelve miles north of the city of Chittagong. Vidyanidhi's father was a Varendra Brahmin who hailed from the town of Baghiya in the district of Dhaka. Pundarika Vidyanidhi himself was a wealthy zamindar of Chakrashala.

He is a zamindar from Chakrashala, extremely rich and very pure in his actions. He is a Varendra Brahmin, whose lineage is extremely respectable. His name is Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi. Sometimes he stays in Chittagong, and sometimes in Nabadwip. He is a disciple of Madhavendra Puri. (Prema-vilasa, 22)

The Lord Glorifies Pundarika

Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi came to Nabadwip because he wished to live by the banks of the Ganges. Mahaprabhu, the indweller of all beings, knew prior to his coming that he had such a desire, and one day in the assembly of devotees started calling out, "Pundarika, my friend, my father!" and crying.

When his associates asked him why he was crying in this way, the Lord described Pundarika Vidyanidhi to them in the following way: "His character is quite extraordinary. Just by hearing his name, the whole world is purified, but he dresses and looks just like a materialistic person in the midst of the accouterments of the life of pleasure. No one is able to recognize him as a Vaishnava, yet he remains constantly merged in the deep ocean of devotion for Krishna. He never bathes in the Ganges because he is afraid to touch the holy

waters with his feet, which would show disrespect. He only goes to take darshan of the Ganges at night and from a distance. He cannot bear to see people engaged in offensive behavior to the Ganges by gargling, cleaning their teeth, washing their hair in her waters, so he never goes there during the daytime. He never engages in worship of the deity without having taken a drink of Ganges water. He has homes in both Chittagong and in Nabadwip and will soon be arriving here. Because of his apparently materialistic behavior, you will not be able to recognize him, but I feel unwell because I am not able to see him."

The Supreme Lord has appeared in Nabadwip, but he heaves long sighs because he doesn't see Pundarika Vidyanidhi. Lord Gauranga stands up and starts to dance, calling out loudly, "Pundarika, my father! Pundarika, my friend, my father! When will I see you?" (Chaitanya Bhagavat 2.7.11-3)

It is thought that Pundarika Vidyanidhi took initiation from Madhavendra Puripada at the same time that Advaita Acharya did. Mahaprabhu always showed him the respect that was due the godbrother of his own guru. In the Chaitanya Charitamrita, Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami writes:

I know Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi to be a major branch, for the Lord himself cried while spontaneously calling out his name. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 1.10.14)

Gadadhara Becomes Pundarika's Disciple

Srila Gadadhara Pandit Goswami, Mukunda Datta and Vasudeva Datta were also originally from Chittagong and so they were acquainted with Pundarika Vidyanidhi. Indeed Gadadhar Pandit's father Madhava Mishra was his good friend. Mukunda Datta knew his transcendental personality and that he was a Vaishnava, but Gadadhara did not, even though he was from the same town. This was, of course, a pretense for the sake of the lila.

When Pundarika was living in Nabadwip, Mukunda Datta told Gadadhar one day that he wanted to introduce him to a great Vaishnava. Srila Gadadhara Pandit Goswami was a brahmachari from childhood and extremely detached from the senses and ascetic in his lifestyle. When he saw Pundarika sitting on comfortable cushions covered in sheets as white as the foam of milk, and wearing very expensive clothes and perfumes, smoking from a hookah, and generally surrounded by all the trappings of a sensual lifestyle, he was unable to recognize

him as a Vaishnava. Indeed, he felt let down.

Mukunda could see from Gadadhara’s face what was going through his head, and in order to bring out Pundarika’s inner mood, recited two verses from the Bhagavatam that enkindle the flames of love for Krishna.

aho bakiyam stana-kala-kutam
jighamsayapayayad apy asadhvi
lebhe gatim dhatry-ucitam tato’nyam
kam va dayalum sharanam prapadye
(Srimad Bhagavatam 3.2.23)

putana lokabalaghni rakshasi rudhirashana
jighamsayapi haraye stanam dattvapa sad-gatim
(Srimad Bhagavatam 10.6.35)

How truly amazing! The sister of Bakasura, the evil Putana, was sent on a mission to kill Krishna. He drank the kalakuta poison mixed with her breast milk, and despite her evil intentions, awarded her the position of a wet nurse (as Ambika Killimba in Goloka). Who is more merciful than he that I should take shelter of him?

That Rakshasi Putana was a blood-drinking killer of infants. Even though she wanted to kill Krishna, because she gave him her breast, she attained the auspicious goal of a nurse in Goloka.

As soon as he heard these two verses in glorification of Krishna’s mercy, Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi cried out “Ha Krishna!” and fell to the floor in a swoon. He began to roll on the floor in ecstasy, knocking over the hookah and tearing his clothes.

When he saw these transcendental symptoms of love on Pundarika’s body, Gadadhara realized that he had committed an offense, which he began to regret. He decided that the only way to rid himself of this offense would be to take initiation from Pundarika, and he related this idea to Mukunda. Mukunda then communicated his desire to Pundarika who happily set a date for the auspicious act. Mahaprabhu also gave his approval and so Gadadhara took mantra initiation from Pundarika Vidyanidhi.

In Krishna lila, Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi is Vrishabhanu and Srila Gadadhara Pandit Goswami is Radha. Because of his identity as Vrishabhanu, Mahaprabhu would call out to him as “father!” when he was himself in the mood of Srimati Radharani. The deep affection from their previous life’s relation became apparent between Pu.ndarika and Gadadhara. No one can understand the pastimes of the Vaishnavas without their mercy.

vaishnava cinite nare devera shakati
mui kon chara shishu alpamati

Even the gods are unable to recognize a Vaishnava, so how can a foolish, fallen child like myself do so?

Even though Pundarika Vidyanidhi was a great Vaishnava, he kept it a secret and appeared just like a materialistic person. One cannot recognize a Vaishnava through any superficial examination. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur writes in his Gaudiya-bhashya to the Chaitanya Bhagavat: “Krishna lila is not accessible to pure sensual understanding. Krishna’s servants occasionally go unrecognized due to their apparently materialistic surroundings. In this way they deceive the conditioned souls. Most scholars take Krishna’s activities to be those of a material lover because of their own obsession with sensuality, and thus they have no faith in him. Others consider Krishna to be an ordinary man who is born and dies and is transformed and thus they have no idea of who he really is. Krishna’s devotees are also sometimes reluctant to reveal their real selves to those who are unworthy and thus make a pretense of being ordinary materialistic persons. Gauranga Mahaprabhu is also sometimes called the pracchanna-avatar or hidden incarnation. In the same spirit, Pundarika put on the show of being sensualist for those who were capable of being deceived by someone’s external appearance.”

One day Pundarika Vidyanidhi came to see Mahaprabhu when it was already quite late at night. As soon as he saw the Lord, he was so overcome by love that he could not even pay his obeisances. Mahaprabhu was similarly anxious to see his most dear devotee, Pundarika and he immediately took him to his breast and washed him with his tears of love. When the other devotees heard Mahaprabhu cry and call Pundarika “father” and “treasure of love”, they knew that he was most dear to him. Pundarika Vidyanidhi was also known to Mahaprabhu’s associates as Acharyanidhi.

The Supreme Lord cried and called out “Pundarika! Father! Today I have seen my own father! Today I rose from my sleep at an auspicious moment, and I saw Premanidhi standing before me. (Chaitanya Bhagavat 2.7.131, 143)

Pundarika in Puri

Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi participated in the nightly sankirtan festival in Srivasa Pandit’s house along with Mahaprabhu and his other associates. On Mahaprabhu’s order, Nityananda and Hari Das went door to door to spread the chanting of the Holy Names and thus to liberate the conditioned souls, succeeding in converting Jagai and Madhai. Later, when Jagai and Madhai were sitting amongst the devotees before Mahaprabhu, they also displayed the ecstatic symptoms of prema. Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi was also present there and he became completely submerged in loving ecstasy to see their fortune. On Mahaprabhu’s order, the devotees led by Advaita Acharya went each year to see the Rathayatra. Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami describes him as being one of the leaders of Gauranga’s associates as they made the annual trip:

All of Mahaprabhu’s servants such as Advaita, Nityananda, Mukunda, Srivasa, Vidyanidhi, Vasudeva and Murari came together each year to meet with him and they would stay four months. The lord enjoyed many pastimes in their company. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.1.255-6)

Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi was also present at Jagannath’s Chandana yatra festival when Mahaprabhu and all his devotees would play in the water of Narendra Sarovara, also known as Chandan Pukur. Pundarika and Svarupa Damodar were close friends and they joyfully splashed each other as a part of these pastimes.

Vidyanidhi and Svarupa Damodar were friends. Laughing, they splashed water on each other. (Chaitanya Bhagavat 3.8.124)

Pundarika Vidyanidhi also participated with Mahaprabhu and his associates in the cleaning of the Gundicha temple, afterwards relishing mahaprasad with them.

Gadadhara Wants to be Reinitiated

One day, Srila Gadadhara Pandit Goswami asked Mahaprabhu if he could retake

again. He said, “Ever since I repeated my ishta-mantra to someone, I have been unable to concentrate when I chant. Please repeat the mantra to me, then my mind will be calmed.”

Mahaprabhu answered, “You already have a mantropadeshaka guru. Be careful, otherwise you will be an offender to him. Everything I have is yours, even my life, what to speak of the mantra. But as long as your guru is alive it is improper for me to repeat it to you.” (Chaitanya Bhagavat 3.10.23-6)

Gadadhara answered, saying, “He isn’t here. Please do it in his place.”

Mahaprabhu replied: “Destiny will bring your guru Vidyanidhi to you.” The omniscient Mahaprabhu continued, “Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi will be here in Puri to see me in ten days.” And that is what came to pass. Mahaprabhu became ecstatic, crying, “Father has come! Father has come!” Upon Vidyanidhi’s arrival, Gadadhara went to him and asked him to repeat the mantra to him.

Gadadhara Deva asked Premanidhi to again initiate him in the ishta-mantra, which he lovingly did. How can I sufficiently glorify Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi, who has a loving disciple like Gadadhara Pandit! (Chaitanya Bhagavat 3.10.79-80)

Our most worshipable Srila Prabhupada commented on the above verse (3.10.24) in the following way: “The mantra is that divine sound or shabda brahma which destroys the mental aptitude for sense gratification. If one instructs a faithless person in the divine sound, the mind becomes contaminated. If one’s divine understanding (divya-jïana) is destroyed, then one must seek the same again. Gadadhara Pandit understood this and so he asked Gaurasundara Mahaprabhu to reinitiate him. Mahaprabhu’s judgment, however, was that he should go to his own guru to hear the mantra again.”

The lesson to be learned here is this: Srila Gadadhara Pandit Goswami is Mahaprabhu’s eternal associate; it is thus impossible that any contamination could have entered his mind. It was only through Gadadhara that he was instructing those who would be guru that if one instructs an unqualified person in the mantra, it loses its potency and no longer brings the same joy to the heart of the practitioner. When this happens, it is necessary to go to the guru again and hear the mantra from him again. It is against custom to hear the mantra again from someone who is not one’s guru, because one cannot change initiating

spiritual masters in this way. Gadadhara was only saying “I cannot concentrate like before” (na sphure bhalo mati), i.e., “The ecstatic feelings no longer come when I chant”, out of an exemplary humility designed to teach humanity how to act.

Jagannath Slaps Pundarika

On the Oriana Shashthi festival, Jagannath’s servants dress him in a cloth which still has starch in it. Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi was a pure sad-acari, i.e., attached to the proper etiquette of Vaishnavism. When he observed this custom, he did not feel happy about it and said to his friend, Svarupa Damodar, “Why do they give this unwashed cloth to the Lord? The people of this country know the rules in the Smritis and the Srutis, so why do they give this mariuwa cloth to Jagannath?”

Svarupa Damodar answered that the supreme lord is beyond the rules and regulations that have become general custom and that therefore there was no fault. Vidyanidhi did not find this conclusion satisfying and he countered by saying, “That may be true for the Lord himself. But his servants should follow the rules of the scripture. The shri-vigraha of the Lord is beyond the material qualities, so you can say this of him, but his servants are not of the same nature as he. So we have to judge whether their behavior is proper or improper.”

Vidyanidhi is Mahaprabhu’s dear associate and beyond any fault, but once again we see that the lord teaches particular lessons through his devotees. Here he wished to show that we have no right to make judgments or to find fault with the behavior of Jagannath’s devotees. That night an angry Jagannath came to Pundarika Vidyanidhi and gave him a dream vision. Vidyanidhi was frightened when he saw the anger of the lord. He saw both Jagannath and Balaram slap him on each of his cheeks and he started to cry out, “Krishna save me! Krishna, save me! Forgive me my offense!” Jagannath said to him:

“There is no end to your offensiveness. Just as there is no question of pure and impure in my case, the same holds true for my servants. You are staying here; you should know all this. If you thought that it was impure, then why did you stay at all? Go home then, if you want to maintain your purity.” (Chaitanya Bhagavat 3.10.131-2)

When he woke up in the morning, the devotees saw the marks of the Lords’ slaps

on his cheeks, which had swollen as a result and they started to laugh. This pastime shows just how dear Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi was to Jagannath and to Mahaprabhu, for the Lord only comes to his dearest devotees to personally punish them in this way.

That night Jagannath and Balaram came to him and, laughing all the while, slapped him on the cheeks. Pundarika Vidyanidhi felt a secret joy at his swollen cheeks, as has been described by Vrindavan Das in detail. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.16.80-1)

It is stated in the Bhakti-ratnakara that Mahaprabhu celebrated the birth of Radharani at Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi’s house. (Bhakti-ratnakara 12.3177).

Vrindavan Das Thakur concludes the Chaitanya Bhagavat with the following glorification of Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi:

The Supreme Lord Gauranga called out the name of this devotee, crying “Pundarika, my father. Anyone who hears about his life and activities will undoubtedly attain Krishna’s lotus feet.” (Chaitanya Bhagavat 3.10.183-4)

Sri Ramachandra Avatara

Lord Sri Ramacandra is the seventh avatara of the Dasavatara. Among the twenty-five lila-avataras, Lord Ramacandra is the twentieth avatara. This has been mentioned in the description of Matsya-avatara. The second purusha-avatara, Sri Garbhodakasayi Vishnu, in the form of Pradyumna, is the original source of Matsya, Kurma, Rama, Nrisimha and other lila-avataras. Srila Rupa Gosvami, in his book Laghu-bhagavatamrita, defines Lord Ramacandra as the paravastha (perfect) form.

nrisimha-rama-krishneshu sad-gunyam paripuritam

paravasthas tu te tasya dipad utpanna-dipa-vat
(Padma Purana)

"Lords Nrisimha, Ramacandra and Krishna possess sixty transcendental opulences in full. When lighting many lamps from one original lamp, all the lamps possess the same nature and similarly, although Rama and Nrisimha are expansions of svayam bhagavan sri krishna, all three of them possess sixty qualities in full."

In the pastimes of Lord Ramacandra, the dignity of moral codes is established. Therefore, Sri Ramacandra is known as Maryada Purushottama (the best form of the Supreme Lord in following codes of morality). Sri Rama's pastimes exhibit all rasas up to vatsalya rasa (parental affection). However, due to moral codes having the highest priority in these pastimes, the mood of parental affection has a restricted nature. Maharaja Dasaratha established these codes, so he was unable to prevent Sri Ramacandra from going to the forest. To exemplify these codes, Sri Ramacandra accepted exile in the forest to uphold a promise that his father had made. Dasaratha Maharaja passed away because he was unable to bear the grief of separation from his son, Ramacandra. Sri Ramacandra vowed to accept only one wife-'eka patni vrata dhara'. Therefore, no one else can worship Him as a husband. Kanta-rasa (conjugal mood) is not exhibited in these pastimes. When the sages of Dandakaranya desired to have Sri Ramacandra as their husband, He told them to achieve conjugal bliss by paying allegiance to the gopis in His pastimes as Krishna. Sri Krishna is Svayam Bhagavan, the Prime Supreme Personality of Godhead, whereas Rama, Nrisimha and others are His partial manifestations (amsa) or the parts of the partial manifestations (kala).

ramadi-murtishu kala-niyamena tishthan
nanavataram akarod bhuvaneshu kintu
krishnah svayam samabhavat paramah puman yo
govindam adi-purusham tam aham bhajami
(Brahma-Samhita 5.39)

"I worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Govinda (Krishna) who manifested Himself in different forms such as Rama and others as His partial manifestations or parts of his partial manifestations."

ete camsa-kalah pumsah
krishnas tu bhagavan svayam

indrari-vyakulam lokam
mridayanti yuge yuge
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.3.28)

“Previously in every epoch, whatever avataras are narrated as partial manifestations or parts of partial manifestations, appeared to protect the world from the oppression of demons. But Sri Krishna-Vrajendranandana, the son of Nanda Maharaja, is Original Bhagavan (Prime Purusha) and is even prior to Adi-Purusha-Avatara Mahavishnu.”

In Sri Vishnu-dharmottara, Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrughna are mentioned as being avataras of Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha respectively. In Padma Purana, Sri Ramacandra is identified as Narayana, Sri Lakshmana as Sesha, Sri Bharata as Lord Narayana’s disc (cakra), and Sri Satrughna as His conchshell (sankha).

nihkshatriyam akrita gam ca trih-sapta-kritvo
ramastu haihaya-kulapyaya-bhargavagnih
so ’bdhim babandha dasa-vaktram ahan sa-lankam
sita -patir jayati loka-mala-ghna-kirtih
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 11.4.21)

“In the form of Bhargava (Parasurama), the fiery destroyer of the Haihaya dynasty rid the earth of the kshatriya class twenty-one times. That same Lord appeared in the form of Rama (the husband of Sita) who is renowned as the purifier of the world and rescuer of the people of the world. He built a bridge across the ocean and destroyed the ten-headed Ravana along with his kingdom of Lanka.”

One can see the significant influence of the holy character of Lord Ramacandra’s pastimes in the life of the Hindu society of India. In the original Valmiki Ramayana, it is written as follows:

The sage Valmiki appeared as the tenth son in the lineage of Praceta Rishi. One day, while living with his disciple Bharadvaja Muni, he went to bathe by the bank of the River Tamasa, which was near the Ganga (Ganges). At that place, upon witnessing the killing of a male kraunca (curlew) bird by a vyadha (a killer of birds), and the grief of the female kraunca, the sage became sad of heart and spoke the following poetic verse to the vyadha:

ma nishada pratistham tvam agamah sasvatih samah
yat kraunca mithunat ekam avadhih kama mohitam
(Valmiki Ramayana, Bala-Kanda 2.15)

"O vyadha, you will never be able to achieve success and stability throughout your life since you have killed one of a pair of kraunca birds while it was totally absorbed in lustful affairs."

Thereafter, the great sage bathed in that holy place and returned to his asrama. Being stricken with grief, he was still thinking about the verse he had just uttered after spontaneously composing it. Just then, the four-headed Lord Brahma himself appeared before him and spoke the following words to console the perturbed Valmiki: "O great sage, it was I who caused you to compose such a verse. Fret no longer over this matter. Instead, you should describe the holy transcendental biography of Sri Ramacandra, which was spoken by Devarishi Narada." Valmiki composed the Ramayana only because of this order of Brahma.

In a Bengali encyclopaedia, a particular incident has been described as traditional hearsay. The story in brief is as follows: He was born from a valmika (ant-hill), so his name became Valmiki. When Lord Sri Ramacandra visited Valmiki's asrama near Citrakuta, Valmiki glorified the name of Rama and His birth pastimes before the Lord.

Although Valmiki was born in the house of a brahmana, he acquired an abominable violent nature due to the association of a vyadha. He fathered many children from the womb of a sudra (low class) woman. He practiced robbery as a means of maintaining them. One day when he attacked some sages, they asked him to give up the practice of robbery. They said that he would have to suffer the consequences of whatever sins he was committing by robbing people. Upon returning home and asking his father, mother, wife and other family members, he found out that they would not share the fruits of his sins. He then asked the sages for a remedy. The sages first advised him to chant the name of Rama. However, upon not being able to utter the name of Rama from his mouth, he was instructed to chant Mara (death) instead. Following their instructions, he chanted 'Mara-Mara' for thousands of yugas (eons). By chanting 'Mara-Mara' (the reversal of 'Rama-Rama'), the name of Rama was eventually pronounced from his mouth, and he achieved perfection in chanting the name of Lord Rama. Because he was

sitting in one place while chanting for such a long time, his body had become the home of valmikas (ants or termites). Therefore, people gave him the name Valmiki.

In the Bengali Ramayana written by Sri Krittivas Ojha (Upadhyaya), some differences from the above description can be seen. Sri Cyavana Muni was Valmiki's father. In his youth, Valmiki's name was Ratnakara and he maintained his family by robbing. One day he attacked Brahma and Narada who then asked Ratnakara who he thought would share in his sins. Ratnakara then returned home and asked his parents and wife if they would share the repercussions of his sinful activities. After asking everyone, he came to know that no one would share his sins. He became repentant and when he inquired as to a remedy for these sins, Brahma advised him to chant the name of Rama. Due to excessive sins, his mouth was unable to pronounce the word 'Rama'. Acting on Brahma's instructions, he chanted the reversed name of 'Mara-Mara'. By chanting 'Mara-Mara', he was eventually able to chant the holy name, 'Rama'. Due to performing austerities for a long time, his body became covered with the homes of valmikas, which was then cleansed with rain by Indra. As the valmikas had covered him, his name became Valmiki. He wrote the Ramayana on the instruction of Narada. The Ramayana is famous as the original epic of India. During the time of the Ramayana, Sanskrit was prevalent as the spoken language in Aryan society. The word 'arya' (honorable, spiritually cultured) has been used quite often in the Ramayana. Special respect for the Ramayana has been observed in places as far away as Javadvipa (Java, Indonesia). Although a large book, the Ramayana of Javadvipa has no section divisions, but does have chapter divisions. The Valmiki Ramayana is of three kinds: Udicca, Dakshinatya and Gaudiya. The 'Udicca' indicates the northwestern Ramayana and the Dakshinatya indicates the southern Ramayana. There is no significant difference between the text and subject of the Udicca and Dakshinatya Ramayanas. However, differences can be seen in the Gaudiya Ramayana. There are twenty-eight commentaries on the Ramayana. The Ramayana has been written in all the languages of India. Among the Ramayanas written in Indian languages, the Tamil Ramayana of Kambala composed in the 9th century of the Christian era, the Bengali Ramayana of Krittivas composed in the 15th century and the Hindi Ramayana of Tulasidasa composed in the 17th century are the most famous. In the western countries, the Ramayana was apparently first translated into the Italian language.

The Valmiki Ramayana has been written in seven kandas (sections), namely:

Adi-kanda, Ayodhya-kanda, Aranya-kanda, Kishkindha-kanda, Sundara-kanda, Lanka-kanda and Uttara-kanda. The Ramayana is a voluminous scripture.

From the description of Ramacandra's lineage in the 9th Canto of Srimad-Bhagavatam, it is understood that Ramacandra appears in the Solar Dynasty (surya-vamsa). Ikshvaku, the son of Vaivasvata Manu, is the origin of the Solar Dynasty and his descendents proceed in the following order: Mandhata from Ikshvaku, Trisanku's son Hariscandra, Hariscandra's son Rohita and after that Maharaja Sagara, Asamanjasa, Ansuman, Dilipa and Bhagiratha. In his lineage came Asmaka, King Balika and other kings. When Parasurama was killing the kshatriyas, King Balika was saved from His wrath due to being surrounded by women. Hence, one of his names became 'Narikavaca' (shielded by women). Being the mula (root) of the kshatriya lineage, he became famous by the name of Mulaka. In the lineage of Balika, the great emperor, King Khatvanga, took birth. From Khatvanga, Dirghabahu, Raghu, Prithu Srava, Aja and finally Aja's son, Maharaja Dasaratha, was born.

khatvangad dirghabahus ca
raghus tasmat prithu-sravah
ajas tato maha-rajas
tasmad dasaratho 'bhavat
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 9.10.1)

Due to the prayers of the demigods, the Supreme Lord, Sri Hari, agreed to become the son of King Dasaratha along with His expansions as Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrughna. According to the description of Valmiki Ramayana, Dasaratha, acting upon the advice of Sumantra, arranged for a Putreshti-yajna to be conducted by the powerful sage Rishyasringa to obtain a son. Subsequently, he begot the Supreme Lord and His expansions as his sons in the previously mentioned four forms. His principal queen, Kausalya, became pregnant after eating caru, an oblation of rice, milk and sugar boiled together, which remained after the yajna. At the auspicious time of Punarvasu-nakshatra in the fourth Zodiacal sign of Cancer, in the month of Caitra on the ninth day of the waxing moon, Lord Sri Ramacandra appeared. Bharata appeared from the womb of Kaikeyi during the Pushya-nakshatra-Mina-lagna and Lakshmana and Satrughna appeared from the womb of Sumitra during the Aslesha-nakshatra-Karkata-lagna.

Ahalya was freed of the curse of becoming a stone, by dint of her encounter with

Sri Ramacandra. The great sage Gautama was the husband of Ahalya. Devaraja Indra deceived Ahalya by assuming the form of Gautama and corrupting her chastity. Displeased with this, Gautama cursed Ahalya and Indra. Turned to stone by the curse of Gautama, Ahalya remained without food for many years, surviving only on air. Ahalya was finally freed from this curse by the touch of the lotus feet of Sri Ramacandra, and was then reunited with her husband, Gautama.

In the pastimes of Sri Ramacandra, the following of ethical codes is of primary importance. His pastimes strongly evoke the sentiment of compassion. By the mercy of Sri Ramacandra, we can be saved from immorality and adharma (unrighteousness). The Supreme Lord, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself, prayed to Ramacandra in the following way to teach us: ‘rama raghava rama raghava rama raghava raksha mam’ (‘raksha mam’-rescue me). From the pastimes of Ramacandra, we learn about the necessity of accepting and serving a spiritual master, devotion to one’s parents and the duties of a brother and a wife. Supreme Lord Sri Ramacandra has exhibited the pastime of abandoning the opulence of royal life, which is very difficult to give up, and of abandoning a perfect wife for keeping dharma and ethics intact. He accepted all kinds of suffering, accepted exile in the forest and went without food and sleep. He walked with His soft lotus feet on the forest paths, which were full of thorns. Out of love for His devotees, the Lord bestowed His mercy on the candala, Guhaka. As the protector of one who surrenders to Him, the Lord awarded shelter to Vibhishana [1]. Sri Rama’s pastimes demonstrate how a henpecked person becomes miserable, and how those who consider someone merely dressed as a sadhu (lacking genuine qualification) to be a real sadhu, become cheated and end up miserable. By annihilating demons such as Ravana and Kumbhakarna, He destroys the living being’s inner demoniac tendencies. To instruct His subjects and for their pleasure, He underwent suffering by asking for Sita’s trial by fire and Her banishment to the forest. Austerities are prohibited for those with evil motives, who are in the mode of dark ignorance, because those austerities only create havoc in the world. To teach this, He killed the sudra Sambuka while the latter was engaged in performing austerities[2]. He taught all these lessons by setting the example Himself.

In the 9th Canto of Srimad-Bhagavatam, Sukadeva Gosvami covers the main topics by describing the transcendental pastimes of Supreme Lord Sri Ramacandra in brief. These topics are described in Srimad-Bhagavatam as follows:

The pastimes of Lord Sri Ramacandra are wonderful, like those of a playful baby elephant. At Sita’s svayamvara (the assembly where Mother Sita was to choose Her husband), in the midst of all the heroes, He playfully lifted the immensely heavy bow of Lord Siva (Hara-dhanu), which was brought in by three hundred men. He then bent and strung it and broke it in everyone’s presence. After breaking the Hara-dhanu at the svayamvara, the Lord gained King Janaka’s daughter Sita who had not been born from the womb, and who was equally as endowed as the Lord with transcendental qualities of form, beauty, age, behaviour, and nature just like Lakshmi. While returning, He crushed the pride of Parasurama who had rid the earth of kshatriyas twenty-one times.

As described in the Ramayana, at the time of Rama’s marriage to Sita in Mithila, King Dasaratha came with his other sons, ministers and sages. There, Lakshmana married Urmila, the daughter of Sisadhvaja Janaka-the King of Mithila, and Bharata and Satrughna married the two daughters of Kusadhvaja-Mandavi and Srutakirti. To reveal the condition of persons who are attached to women, Lord Sri Ramacandra, in order to fulfil the desire of His wife, ran after a golden deer. This deer was in fact Marica who had assumed this form according to the instructions of Ravana. Taking advantage of the golden opportunity of Sri Ramacandra’s absence, Ravana kidnapped Sita. To exhibit the sorrowful condition of a person who is attached to women, Sri Ramacandra wandered in the forest in a pitiable state with His brother Lakshmana, displaying distress due to separation from His beloved.

In this context, as written in the Caitanya-caritamrita of Srila Krishnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami, the example of a devotee of Rama in South India is to be considered. How was it that Ravana who was overcast with gloom and arrogance, could kidnap Sitadevi, the absolute counterpart transcendental spiritual energy of the absolute transcendental Supreme Lord Sri Ramacandra? Upon seeing this description in the Ramayana, a brahmana devotee of Rama became filled with grief and gave up eating. Sriman Mahaprabhu put this question to him: “Considering that the ignorant Ravana had not even seen the absolute transcendental spiritual entity, Sitadevi, how could he have kidnapped Her? Explaining, Sriman Mahaprabhu said that Ravana had only kidnapped the Maya-Sita or illusory material form of Sita, and that the real Sita had disappeared. The story of the kidnapping of Maya-Sita is described in the Kurma Purana of Vedavyasa Muni.

In the pastimes of Rama, a wonderful quality can be seen in the character of Bharata. When obstructed in the service of the Supreme Lord Sri Ramacandra, He even rejected His own mother[3].

gurur na sa syat sva-jano na sa syat
pita na sa syaj janani na sa syat
daivam na tat syan na patis ca sa syan
na mocayed yah samupeta-mrityum
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 5.5.18)

"He who cannot rescue a conditioned soul from the worldly bondage of proximate death by advising the path of devotion to God, is not entitled to be accepted as a real guru, real kinsman, real father (such a man should not endeavour to beget a child), real mother (such a woman should not endeavour to conceive), real demigod (such a demigod should not be eligible for worship) or a real husband (such a man should not marry)."

The Supreme Lord creates all living beings but is satisfied only after creating man. Man has the ability to discriminate between good and bad, eternal and non-eternal, and can worship the Supreme Lord. Human birth is not meant only for eating, sleeping, defending and mating like the beasts, birds, aquatics and other animals. Still, we generally find that most people have little or no inclination to worship God. Evidently, we cannot have quality and quantity at the same time. If we wish to increase quantity, we must sacrifice quality and vice-versa.

After killing Ravana and upon finishing the period of His forest exile, Sri Ramacandra returned to Ayodhya on the pushpaka (flower) airplane with Sitadevi, Hanuman, Sugriva and Lakshmana. The citizens, Brahma and the other demigods, were in a state of jubilation. However, Sri Ramacandra lamented upon hearing that His brother Bharata was eating barley cooked in the urine of a cow, was covering his body with the bark of trees, was wearing matted locks of hair and lying down on kusa grass. When Sri Ramacandra returned to Ayodhya, Bharata took Lord Ramacandra's wooden shoes upon his head and came out of Nandigrama accompanied by ministers, priests and citizens singing and playing music. He fell at the lotus feet of Sri Ramacandra with his eyes full of tears of love. Bharata exhibited such wonderful character! It is difficult for modern men to even contemplate such an ideal. In the present day situation, the administrative class will not hesitate to perform any heinous work to protect their position. Where there is great attachment to position, there cannot be good

administration. We can learn from the ideal examples of character of Sri Ramacandra and Bharata, what the proper character for administrators should be.

Upon seeing their beloved King Sri Ramacandra after a long period of separation, His subjects showered Him with flower garlands and danced in great ecstasy. At that time, Bharata carried Ramacandra's wooden shoes, Sugriva and Vibhishana carried a camara (a fly-whisk) and an excellent fan, Hanuman carried a white umbrella, Satrughna carried a bow and quiver, Sitadevi carried a water-pot filled with water from holy places, Angada carried a sword and Jambavan carried a golden amulet.

While wandering in Ayodhya in disguise, Sri Ramacandra heard one of His subjects casting aspersions upon the character of Sitadevi. Upon hearing this, the Lord banished Sitadevi even though She was pregnant. What a wonderful ideal and spirit of sacrifice this was to teach His subjects!

iti lokad bahu-mukhad
duraradhyad asamvidah
patya bhitena sa tyakta
prapta pracetasasramam
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 9.11.10)

"Men with a poor fund of knowledge and heinous character speak nonsensically. fearing such rascals, Lord Ramacandra abandoned his pregnant wife, Sitadevi. thus, after being banished by Rama, Sitadevi went to Valmiki Muni's asrama."

Sri Ramacandra even abandoned His brother Lakshmana who was dearer to Him than His own life, in order to maintain the codes of dharma. The gist of this incident is as follows:

Once, Lord Brahma sent Kala, in the form of Tapas, as a messenger to Sri Ramacandra. Before conveying Brahma's message, the messenger placed the condition before Sri Ramacandra that he would tell Him the message if Sri Rama promised him that no one would be able to hear his words. If anyone heard or saw their secret conversation, he would be fit to be killed by Sri Rama. Sri Ramacandra accepted this condition. However, while the secret conversation between the messenger and Sri Ramacandra was taking place, Durvasa Rishi came to see Sri Ramacandra. Lakshmana, who was appointed as the gatekeeper during this secret conversation, became afraid upon seeing the angry form of

Durvasa Rishi and went to Sri Ramacandra to ask His permission to allow him inside. To keep His promise, on the instructions of Vasishtha, Sri Ramacandra banished His brother Lakshmana who was dearer to Him than His own life.

Lakshmana's demonstration that the elder brother is as respectable as the father, his abandonment of all material comforts for the service of his object of worship, Sri Ramacandra, and his service to Him for fourteen years while being in the forest with Him, are all ideal examples. Lakshmana had not been ordered to go to the forest in exile, yet he went after his elder brother to serve Him. Lakshmana, with his transcendental powers and the help of Vibhishana, was able to obstruct the Nikumbhila-yajna of Ravana's son, Meghanada who had conquered Indra. Lakshmana then killed Meghnada. Indrajit (Meghnada) obtained the boon that only one who is able to remain without food for fourteen years and who also has full control over the senses, would be able to kill him. Lakshmana did not take food while living in the forest for fourteen years, and performed the pastime of conquering all his senses. While remaining all the time with Sri Ramacandra and Sitadevi and serving Them, He never saw beyond the lotus feet of Sitadevi.

Even Sri Rama's internal potency, Sitadevi, although instructed repeatedly by Sri Ramacandra not to go with Him to the forest (as this punishment was meant for Him and not for Her or anyone else), left behind all comforts for the service of Her husband. By this action, She defined the duty of a chaste wife and exhibited the ideal of following the husband. Supreme Lord Sri Ramacandra was completely fascinated by the pure love of Sitadevi, which surpassed all His expectations, but in order to teach the dharma of a king who is engaged in the welfare of the citizens, and although giving pain to Himself, He asked for the ordeal by fire (Agni-pariksha) and declared the injunction of banishment of Sitadevi who is non-different from His own self. Once, arrangements were being made for an Asvamedha-yajna under the priesthood of Vasishtha and other sages. The wife of the person to perform the Asvamedha yajna has to be initiated in the yajna before the husband. Because of this rule, it was proposed that Sri Ramacandra get married again, but Sri Ramacandra rejected the proposal and arranged to have a golden Deity of Sita instead. He was given yajna initiation, along with the golden Deity of Sita as His wife. What can be a better example of Sitadevi's most excellent chastity and love than this? Yet, to remove the doubts of the citizens, in the Naimisha area on the banks of the Gomati, He invited sages, all the kings, and even Sugriva along with the Vanaras (monkeys) and Vibhishana along with the Rakshasas (a type of demon). Maharishi Valmiki was

also present in the sacrificial arena with Lava and Kusa. Upon hearing the Ramayana from Lava and Kusa, which had been composed by Valmiki, Sri Ramacandra understood that they were His sons.

Acting on the order of Valmiki Muni, Sri Ramacandra sent messengers to invite Sitadevi to prove Her chastity before everyone at the sacrificial arena. Sitadevi saw that even after She had been tested two times, everyone's doubt had not been removed. Therefore, She came with the determination that this time She would enter into Rasatala (the lowest of the seven underworlds). So, addressing the earth-goddess, She said, "O Devi, if I do not think of anyone other than Raghava in My mind then divide into two parts and give Me shelter. If this is true, I worship Rama with all My senses and do not know anyone other than Rama. O Devi, divide into two parts and let Me enter."

Everyone was astonished to see a miraculous divine throne come up from the middle of the earth, and as Sitadevi sat on it, it entered into Rasatala. Upon Sitadevi's entering into Rasatala, everyone glorified Her with loud applause. Sri Ramacandra, taking support of the yajna-danda, lowered His face, and cried for a long time in the grief of separation fom Sita.

In the Ramayana, Hanuman's dedication to his object of worship is displayed to the utmost, and his devoutness has an ideal place among the servants of Rama. For the nourishment of Sriman Mahaprabhu's pastimes, Hanuman appeared as Murari Gupta. Sriman Mahaprabhu taught the glories and importance of dedication to one's object of worship, through Murari Gupta. Sriman Mahaprabhu explained to Murari Gupta that worship of Sri Krishna, the son of Nanda Maharaja, is best. Upon hearing this subject from Mahaprabhu, Murari Gupta promised Him that from now on he would worship Sri Krishna, but even after giving his word to Mahaprabhu he was not able to keep his promise to the very end. Murari Gupta then fell at the lotus feet of Mahaprabhu and spoke the following words while crying:

raghunathera paya muni veciyachon matha
kadhite na pari matha, mane pai vyatha
sri-raghunatha-carana chadana na yaya
tava ajna-bhanga haya, ki karon upaya
tate more ei kripa kara, dayamaya
tomara age mrityu ha-uka, yauka samsaya
(Caitanya-Caritamrita, Madhya 15.149 -151)

“I have sold my head unto the lotus feet of Raghunatha. I cannot withdraw my head, for that would give me too much pain. It is not possible for me to give up the service of Raghunatha’s lotus feet. at the same time, if I do not do so I shall break your order. what can I do? You are all-merciful, so kindly grant me the mercy that I may die before you so that all my doubts will be finished[4].”

While assuring Murari Gupta, Mahaprabhu praised him, saying:

ei-mata tomara nishtha janibara tare
tomare agraha ami kailun bare bare
sakshat hanuman tumi sri-rama-kinkara
tumi kene chadibe tanra carana-kamala
(Caitanya-Caritamrita, Madhya 15.155 -156)

“Just to test your firm faith in your Lord, I requested you again and again to change your worship from Lord Ramacandra to Lord Krishna. Indeed, you are the incarnation of Hanuman. Consequently you are an eternal servant of Lord Ramacandra. Why should you give up the worship of Lord Ramacandra and his lotus feet?”

The Supreme Lord, Sri Ramacandra, glorifying His servant Hanuman, spoke to Maharishi Agastya as follows: “The strengths of Vali and Ravana, although being incomparable, were not equal to that of Hanuman’s. Hanuman is filled with chivalry, valor, patience, intelligence, scriptural knowledge and all other desirable qualities. Hanuman alone accomplished the crossing of the ocean between southern India and Lanka, the bringing of the message of Sita, the killing of the demons, the subsequent burning of Lanka and so on. We do not hear such deeds even of Yama, Indra, Kuvera and others. It is only by the strength of Hanumanji that I achieved victory over Lanka, rescued Sita and saw Lakshmana come back to life after being hit by an irresistibly powerful javelin.”

The question may be raised that if Hanuman was so powerful, then why did he not kill Vali during Vali’s fight with Sugriva? In reply to this, Agastya Muni narrates the story of Hanuman’s curse:

Hanuman was fathered by Vayu (the wind-god) and took birth from the womb of Anjana. After the birth of Hanuman, Anjana went to the forest to pick some fruits due to distress from hunger. Upon seeing the red sun looking like a Java

Flower (Hibiscus), Hanuman mistook it for a fruit and jumped up to eat it. To protect his son from the sun's heat, the cool wind (Vayu) began to blow. Knowing that the approaching child Hanuman would perform a great deed in the future, the sun did not burn him. That day, Rahu [5] (the truncated demon) went to devour the sun but upon seeing Rahu, Hanuman went to eat him also. Being afraid, Rahu ran to Indra and told him that when he went to devour the sun, another Rahu had attacked him. Indra, while following on his elephant Airavata, assured Rahu and sent him ahead as they approached the sun. Hanuman again saw the returning Rahu as a fruit. Seeing Hanuman coming to catch him, Rahu cried out loudly. Mistaking Airavata for a big fruit, Hanuman went to catch him also. Seeing no other way to stop him, Indra attacked Hanuman with his vajra (thunderbolt) weapon. Hanuman's left hanu (jaw) was broken and he fell down on a mountain. Upon seeing the unfortunate condition of his baby son, Vayu entered into a cave with him. At the disappearance of air (Vayu), all the living beings stopped breathing and evacuating, and dried up like wood. The demigods and demons approached Brahma to save their lives. Brahma saw the golden-complexioned child in the lap of Vayu and touched him with compassion and affection. When Hanuman regained his life, Vayu (air) started flowing again with satisfaction. Brahma told the demigods that this child would someday perform some great work, so they should bless him. Then Indra blessed the child with the following words: "Hanuman will never be killed even if hit by the vajra weapon. His jaw was broken by the vajra, therefore his name will be Hanuman." Surya (the sun) gave a one-hundredth part of his splendor to Hanuman and also gave him the benediction that he would be a great speaker, very learned in the scriptures. Varuna, Yama, Kuvera and others also gave benedictions to Hanuman. Brahma assured Vayu by saying that Hanuman would bestow fearlessness to friends, fear to enemies, would be undefeatable, would be able to travel with unparalleled speed and would perform great deeds.

Becoming powerful by all these blessings, Hanuman began to create mischief in the asramas of sages due to his childish playfulness. In order to control him, the sages cursed him that he would not be aware of his own power for a long time. He would come to know of his power only if someone told him about it. Thereafter, Hanuman became quiet and wandered peacefully. Hanumanji's influence is seen strongly in northern and western India. In these regions, almost all the followers of sanatana-dharma install and worship the Deity of Hanuman. They especially recite the glories of Hanuman from the Ramayana of Tulasidasa.

In the 11th Canto of Srimad-Bhagavatam, the description of the avatara for Kali-

yuga has been disclosed in the context of yuga-avataras. In that description, Vedavyasa Muni has sung the glories of Kali-yuga's avatari, Sriman Mahaprabhuji, in two verses. Both of these verses can also be understood in relation to Sri Ramacandra:

dhyeyam sada paribhava-ghnam abhishta-doham
tirthaspadam siva-virinci-nutam saranyam
bhrityarti-ham pranata-pala bhavabdhi-potam
vande maha-purusha te caranaravindam
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 11.5.33)

"O Mahapurusha, protector of all who offer respects unto You, you are always meditated upon, You are the destroyer of the embarrassing conditions of material life, the provider of all that is desirable and the abode of all holy places. You are worshipped by Lord Siva and Lord Virinci (Brahma), You are the shelter, the remover of Your servants' distress and the deliverer from the ocean of material existence. I offer my obeisances unto Your lotus feet."

tyaktva su-dustyaja-surepsita-rajya-lakshmim
dharmishtha arya-vacasa yad agad aranyam
maya-mrigam dayitayepsitam anvadhavad
vande maha-purusha te caranaravindam
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 11.5.34)

"O Mahapurusha, the best of all those who are followers of dharma, You gave up Lakshmi and the opulence of royal life, which are desired even by the demigods. You went to the forest to honor the word of the arya and ran after the illusory deer to fulfil the desire of Your beloved. I offer my obeisances unto Your lotus feet."

vitarasi dikshu rane dik-pati-kamaniyam
dasa-mukha-mauli-balim ramaniyam
kesava dhrita-rama-sarira jaya jagadisa hare
(Sri Jayadeva's Dasavatara-stotra 7th Verse)

"O Kesava! In the form of Rama You cut off the ten heads of Ravana and made delightful gifts of them to the lords of the ten directions. O Lord of the universe! All glories unto You, manifested in the form of Rama!"

For those who are unaquainted with the stories of Ramayana, the following are brief summaries of the seven kandas:

Adi-kanda

Narada describes the pastimes of Lord Rama; Valmiki composes the Ramayana; Lava and Kusa sing the Ramayana; Dasaratha's bringing of Rishyasringa; Lord Narayana accepts the son-hood of Dasaratha; the birth of Vali, Sugriva, Hanuman and other Vanaras (monkeys); the birth of Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrughna; Sage Visvamitra arrives in Ayodhya to take Rama and Lakshmana to slay the Rakshasas (demons); Dasaratha refuses to let Rama and Lakshmana go with Visvamitra at first but later agrees; the narration of the births of Tadaka and Marica; the slaying of Tadaka by Rama; a description of the lineage of Kusa; Visvamitra's narration of the origin of Ganga; King Sagara gets sixty-thousand sons; Sagara's dynasty is destroyed by the curse of Kapila Muni [6]; Bhagiratha gets a boon from Brahma; Ganga goes to Patala (the netherworld); deliverance of the sons of Sagara; Indra cuts to pieces a foetus in the womb of Diti; a description of the curse of Ahalya and Indra; the redemption of Ahalya from her curse; Rama and Lakshmana travel to the sacrificial arena of King Janaka; Visvamitra arrives at the asrama of Vasishtha; Visvamitra steals the Sabala cow; Visvamitra is defeated doing battle with Vasishtha; Visvamitra performs austerities and attains the status of a brahmana; King Janaka obtains the Hara-dhanu (bow of Lord Siva); Ramacandra breaks the Hara-dhanu and accepts Sita as His wife; the marriage of Ramacandra and others; Parasurama's pride is destroyed; Dasaratha arrives in Ayodhya with his daughters-in-law; Bharata journeys to his maternal home.

Ayodhya-kanda

Dasaratha decides to install Sri Ramacandra as the crown prince; Vasishtha visits Rama and Dasaratha; the discussion between Kaikeyi and Manthara; Kaikeyi requests the boon of the exile of Rama and the boon of the appointment of Bharata as crown prince; Dasaratha laments; Rama decides to go to the forest to honour His father's promise; Sita and Lakshmana depart for the forest with Rama; Rama, Lakshmana and Sita accept garments made of tree-bark; the further lamentation of Dasaratha; Rama meets Guhaka, the king of the Nishadas (low-caste hunters); Guhaka's unprecedented devotion for Rama; Rama goes to Citrakuta and to Valmiki; Dasaratha laments again upon hearing the message of Rama from Sumantra; the lamentation of Kausalya; Dasaratha narrates the

description of the killing of Rishi Kumara; the death of Dasaratha; a messenger is sent to bring Bharata; Bharata laments upon hearing about the death of his father; Bharata refuses to accept the kingdom; Bharata arrives at Citrakuta with his army; Sri Ramacandra laments on hearing of the death of His father; Jabali gives instructions on dharma to Rama; Bharata returns with Rama's wooden shoes, hands over the kindom to his guru and departs for Nandigrama; the story of Rama and Kulapati in Citrakuta; the asrama of Atri Muni.

Aranya-kanda

Sri Ramacandra enters the Dandaka forest; the slaying of the Rakshasa, Viradha; Sutikshna Muni narrates the story of Ilvalvatapi to Rama and chants the glories of Agastya Muni; Sri Rama's introduction to Jatayu; Rama resides in the forest of Pancavati; Lakshmana cuts off the nose of Surpanakha; the killing of the fourteen thousand Rakshasas sent by Khara; the slaying of the three Rakshasas Dushana, Trisira and Khara; Ravana becomes angry upon hearing about the deaths of Khara and Dushana, Ravana goes to the asrama of Marica and plots to kidnap Sita; Ravana decides to kidnap Sita on Surpanakha's advice, even after restraint from Marica; Marica assumes the form of a golden deer and departs for the Dandaka forest; Rama leaves to kill Marica in the form of a deer; Lakshmana goes after Rama upon being rebuked rudely by Sita; Ravana abducts Sita; the fight between Jatayu and Ravana; Sita drops jewelry from Ravana's chariot; Ravana leaves Sita in the Asoka grove and goes to his inner palace; Rama laments on the disappearance of Sita; the hearing of the story of Sita from the dying Jatayu; the performance of the funeral ceremony of Jatayu; Rama and Lakshmana cut off the arms of Kabandha; Rama and Lakshmana go to Pampa-sarovara and meet Sabari; the discussion with Lakshmana about going to Rishyamuka mountain.

Kishkindha-kanda

Hanuman in the dress of a mendicant meets with Rama; Hanuman seats Rama and Lakshmana on his back and takes Them to Sugriva; Sugriva vows to rescue Sita and Rama vows to kill Vali; Rama pierces the seven Tala (palmyra) trees; Sugriva is defeated in his first fight with Vali; the second time, Vali falls down after being pierced by the arrow of Rama; Vali hands Angada over to Sugriva and leaves his body; Tara laments; Sugriva's coronation and Rama's lament due to separation from Sita; Sugriva worries upon seeing Lakshmana's fury; messengers are sent in all directions to search for Sita; Rama gives His ring to

Hanuman as an emblem; the Vanaras return without discovering the whereabouts of Sita; influenced by the mystic power of Maya Danava, Hanuman and other Vanaras enter a cave and meet with a tapasvini (female ascetic); Hanuman and others are delivered from the cave; Angada and others decide to fast unto death upon not obtaining any information about Sita; Sampati informs them about Sita; the Vanaras depart for the seashore; the show of power of the Vanaras; Jambuvana (the very powerful king of bears) narrates the birth pastimes of Hanuman; Hanuman increases his size.

Sundara-kanda

Hanuman leaps from the top of Mahendra Mountain; the killing of Simhika; Hanuman’s fight with Lankini who had assumed the form of a Rakshasi; Hanuman enters the inner palace of Ravana, and searches for Sita in the Asoka grove; Hanuman grieves upon seeing the miserable condition of Sita; a description of the birth of the Rakshasi Trijata; Hanuman’s meeting with Sita; Hanuman destroys the pleasure grove; Hanuman’s intense fight with the Rakshasas; Hanuman kills Jambumali, Virupaksha, Akshaya Kumara and other principal Rakshasas; Indrajit captures Hanuman and brings him to the court of King Ravana; Ravana orders Hanuman to be put to death; Vibhishana gives his advice to Ravana; Ravana orders the burning of Hanuman’s tail; the burning of Lanka by Hanuman; Hanuman’s second meeting with Sita; Hanuman returns to Mahendra Mountain; the Vanaras destroy Madhuvana in a mood of joy after hearing the news of Sita; Hanuman gives Sita’s emblem to Ramacandra.

Lanka-kanda

Ramacandra weeps upon hearing of the lamentations of Sita from Hanuman; Rama instructs Sugriva to build a bridge; Vibhishana tries to give good advice to Ravana; Ravana speaks proud words; Vibhishana leaves Ravana and goes to Rama; Ravana sends his spy Suka to the camp of the Vanara army; Rama constructs a bridge; Suka is freed and goes to the court of Ravana; Ravana again sends a spy, Cara; Sita laments upon being shown the illusory head of Rama by Ravana; talks between Sita and Sarama; Malyavan (a Rakshasa) gives good advice to Ravana; Ramacandra views Lanka from Subela Mountain; Rama surrounds Lanka with His army; the battle begins; Rama and Lakshmana are bound by Indrajit; the Vanara soldiers become depressed; Ramacandra laments upon seeing the sad plight of Lakshmana; Rama and Lakshmana are freed from the naga-pasa (snake noose) of Indrajit; Ravana enters the battle after

Dhumraksha, Vajradamshtra, Akampana and Prahasta perish; Kumbhakarna's sleep is interrupted after Ravana's defeat; Kumbhakarna chastises Ravana; Kumbhakarna enters the battle; Sugriva cuts off Kumbhakarna's nose as he is entering into Lanka with him; Kumbhakarna again sets off for battle; Rama kills Kumbhakarna; the killing of Narantaka, Devantaka, Mahodara, Trisira and other giant Rakshasas; Indrajit enters the battle and wins; Hanuman brings the mountain of herbs; the Vanaras burn Lanka; the killing of Nikumbha, Makaraksha and other Rakshasas; Indrajit kills the illusory Sita; Indrajit enters Lankapuri for the Nikumbhila yajna; Rama laments upon hearing of the death of Sita from Hanuman; Lakshmana kills Indrajit; Ravana laments; Ravana hits Lakshmana with an irresistibly powerful javelin; Hanuman brings Gandhamadana Mountain; the treatment of Lakshmana; the intense battle between Rama and Ravana; Rama kills Ravana with the brahmastra weapon; the lamentation of Mandodari; the coronation of Vibhishana; Sita hears the message of victory from Hanuman; Sita's ordeal by fire; Sri Ramacandra accepts Sitadevi; Ramacandra's conversation with Dasaratha who is brought back by Mahadeva; the Vanara army is revived by the nectar of immortality from Devaraja Indra; Ramacandra leaves for Ayodhya on the pushpaka airplane; the reunion with Bharadvaja, Guhaka and others.

Uttara-kanda

The coronation of Sri Rama; the birth of Kuvera and his taking up residence in Lanka; a description of the birth of the Rakshasas by Agastya Muni; the demigods go to Mahadeva; following the order of Mahadeva, the demigods go to Vishnu; the Rakshasas journey to Suraloka for battle; Malya Vanara flees to Patala after being defeated by Sumali; Sumali's daughter goes to Visvasrava and Ravana and others take birth from her womb; Ravana and others perform austerities; Ravana conquers Lanka and becomes king; the birth of Indrajit; Ravana goes to fight with Kuvera; Kuvera's defeat; Vedavati curses Ravana; Ravana fights with Yama on the advice of Narada; Ravana goes to Vali; Ravana conquers the planet of the sun-god; friendship with Mandhata; Ravana sees Kapila in Patala; Ravana enters Lanka and orders Surpanakha, who was burning from the fire of the grief of separation from her husband, to go to the Dandaka forest; friendship with the Madhu demon; Indrajit enters Lanka taking Indra with him; Indra gets free and the story of Ahilya; a description of the fight between Karttaviryarjuna and Ravana; the friendship of Ravana with Vali; a description of Hanuman's birth; a description of the births of Vali and Sugriva; Ravana goes to Svetadvipa; the Vanaras and Rakshasas return to their respective places; a

description of the wanderings of Sita and Rama in the Asoka forest; upon hearing rumors about Sita, Rama orders Lakshmana to banish Sita; Lakshmana leaves Sita in the area of Valmiki's asrama; Lakshmana returns to Rama; Rama tells Lakshmana about Nimi and Vasishtha; the episode of Yayati; Sri Ramacandra orders Satrughna to kill Lavana; the birth of Lava and Kusa in the asrama of Valmiki; the episode of Mandhata; Satrughna kills Lavana and establishes the capital of Mathura; Rama cuts off the head of the sudra, Sambuka, because he is performing austerities; a description of the killing of Vritra and the Asvamedha-yajna of Indra; Rama goes to Naimisharanya; Valmiki comes to the yajna of Rama with his disciples and Lava and Kusa sing the Ramayana; Sita comes to the court of Rama and enters into Patala; Kausalya and others leave their bodies; the coronation of Angada and Candraketu; Kala comes to Rama in the form of Tapas; Durvasa arrives; Rama banishes Lakshmana; the coronation of Lava and Kusa; Sri Ramacandra enters into the Sarayu with the Vanaras, Rakshasas and other citizens; the glories of the singing of Ramayana.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] When Vibhishana approached Sri Ramacandra, the Lord said:

sakad eva prapanno yas tavasmiti ca yacate
abhayam sarvada tasmai dadamy etad vratam mama
(Ramayana, Yuddha-kanda 18.33)

"This is My vow: if anyone seriously surrenders to Me and even once says, 'I am Yours,' and asks for my protection, I always give him protection."

[2] Hatari sugatidayakah --- one who is killed by the Supreme Lord who is all-good, will certainly attain eternal peace.

[3] Bali Maharaja gave up the order of his guru Sukracarya; Vibhishana gave up his brother Ravana; Prahlada gave up his father Hiranyakashipu; Bharata gave up his mother Kaikeyi; King Khatvanga gave up the demigods, and the wives of the yajnik brahmanas gave up their husbands upon seeing their aversion to the Supreme Lord.

[4] Hanuman's assertion:

shri nathe janaki nathe abhede paramatmani

tathapi mama sarvasvam ramah kamala-locana
“Although ontologically the master of Lakshmi, the master of Radhika and the master of Sita are identical, lotus-eyed Rama is my only object of worship.”

[5] Rahu is a truncated demon whose head was separated from his body by the wheel weapon of Lord Vishnu. According to the Vedic teachings, nothing can be sustained without being seated and controlled by consciousness. For example: the sun by the sun-god or the wind by the wind-god.
[6] According to Srimad-Bhagavatam (9.8.12):

na sadhu-vado muni-kopa-bharjita
napendra-putra iti sattva-dhamani
katham tamo roshamayam vibhavyate
jagat-pavitratmani khe rajo bhuvah

“It is not true that sixty thousand sons of Sagar were destroyed by the curse of Kapila Muni. Rather, they wrongly blamed Kapila Muni for concealing the horse and were therefore destroyed by the weight of their own offence committed against him.”

--- From "Dasavatara - The Ten Manifestations of God" by Swami B.B. Tirtha.

Sri Ramananda Raya

There are two Arjunas in Krishna lila: one is a priya-narma-sakha in Vraja, the other is one of the Pandavas. These two combined to become Ramananda Raya, the dear companion of Mahaprabhu. He was very knowledgeable in the teachings of loving devotion to Radha and Krishna, which he described to Gauracandra on a daily basis. Some people say that Ramananda Raya was Lalita Sakhi, while others do not. Mahaprabhu himself told Bhavananda Raya that he was Pandu, the husband of Kunti and father of the Pandavas. The Pandava

Arjuna also united with the gopi named Arjuniya. Thus the most aware say that Ramananda Raya combined all these three personalities. Proof of this is found in the Padmapurana, where it is stated that the Pandava Arjuna became the gopi Arjuniya. (Gaura-ganoddesha-dipika 120-124)

As stated in these verses from Gaura-ganoddesha-dipika, some people hold that Ramananda Raya was an incarnation of Lalita. Some others are of the opinion that he was Vishakha. Srila In his commentary on Chaitanya Charitamrita (2.8.23), Bhaktivinoda Thakur writes, "The same love which Vishakha had for Radha and Krishna in Vraja, and that love which Radha and Krishna had for Vishakha, awakened in them when they met." Thus it is clear that Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur saw Ramananda Raya as Vishakha.

Ramananda Raya was one of the Lord's three and a half most intimate associates.

The Lord accepted Shikhi Mahiti's sister as one of Radha's friends. In the entire world, there were only three and a half devotees who were so worthy. They were Svarupa Damodar Goswami, Ramananda Raya and Shikhi Mahiti. His sister was the half person. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.2.105-6)

Ramananda's Social Status

Ramananda Raya's father was named Bhavananda Raya. He was born in a family of the Orissan karana caste, an administrative clan like the kayasthas. He was previously King Pandu. He had five sons, of whom Ramananda was the oldest. The other four brothers were Gopinath Pattanayaka, Kalanidhi, Sudhanidhi and Vaninatha Pattanayaka. The Lord states in Chaitanya Charitamrita: "You are Pandu himself, and your wife is Kunti. Your five sons are the five Pandavas." (Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.10.53)

Bhavananda Raya made his home in Brahmagiri or Alalanath, about 12 miles west of Puri. Manohara Raya, a descendant of Ramananda Raya, has written his family's history. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur has summarized some details of this account in his Anubhashya and concludes: "Orissan society considers the karana community to be part of the shudra caste. Ramananda Raya was born into this community. Nevertheless, though he was considered by society to be a shudra by birth, he was a de facto Brahmin, indeed,

as a Vaishnava paramahamsa, he was spiritual master to the Brahmins."

By Krishna’s will, the creator Brahma himself appeared in an outcaste family in order to show that one’s family and one’s race have absolutely no importance. Born as a Muslim, Hari Das still enriched Lord Gauranga’s pastimes.

Hari Das Thakur was born in a low-caste family on the Lord’s order in order to show that caste and class have no importance at all. All the scriptures say that a devotee of Vishnu, though born in a lowly family, is still worshipable by all. What will one’s caste do for one is born in a high-caste but does not worship Krishna? He will go to hell in spite of his high birth. Hari Das took a low birth just to bear witness to these scriptural statements. He is comparable to Prahlad who was born in a family of demons, or Hanuman, who was born a monkey. They belong only superficially to low castes. (Chaitanya Bhagavat 1.16.237-240)

A Vaishnava is beyond the qualities of the material nature. Anyone who considers a devotee in terms of his birth or race is destined for a hellish existence.

arcye shiladhir gurushu naramatir vaishnave jatibuddhir
vishnor va vaishnavanam kalimalamathane padatirthe ‘mbubuddhih
shrivishnor namni mantre sakala-kalushahe shabda-samanya-buddhir
vishnau sarveshvareshe tad-itara-samadhir yasya va naraki sah

Anyone who considers the deity to be nothing but stone,
The guru to be an ordinary human being,
Or the vaishnava to be a member of a particular caste or race,
Who takes the holy water which has washed
Vishnu or the vaishnava’s feet
And can destroy all the sins of the age of kali,
To be ordinary water,
Who thinks that the name or mantra of vishnu,
Which destroys all evils, is the same as any other sound,
Or who takes vishnu to be same as anything other than him,
Has a hellish nature.
(Padma-Purana)

According to the Bhajana-nirnaya, Ramananda was the disciple of Raghavendra

Puri and grand-disciple of Madhavendra Puri.

Sarvabhauma Tells the Lord about Ramananda

Raya Ramananda was King Prataparudra’s governor in Vidyanagara and later was one of his ministers.

The Lord took sannyas in the month of Magh and arrived in Puri during the month of Phalgun. After celebrating the Dola Yatra in Puri, Mahaprabhu delivered Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya in the month of Chaitra.In the month of Vaishakh, he set off on his pilgrimage to South India. Though Mahaprabhu had decided to travel alone, Nityananda Prabhu convinced him to take a servant, Krishna Das, as a travelling companion. As he was leaving, Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya gave the Lord four kaupinas and loincloths, and requested him to visit Ramananda Raya on the banks of the Godavari.

As Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was departing, Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya submitted the following at his lotus feet, "My Lord, you must fulfill this request of mine. In the town of Vidyanagara, on the bank of the Godavari, there is a responsible government officer named Ramananda Raya. Please do not neglect him, thinking he belongs to a shudra family engaged in materialistic activities. Please take my word for it that you should meet him without fail. If anyone is fit to associate with you, it is he. No other devotee can compare with him in knowledge of the divine sentiments. He has attained the highest limits of learning as well as being experienced in the science of devotional sentiments. If you converse with him, you will recognize his exalted character. When I first met him, I could not understand that everything he said and did were all transcendental. I made fun of him simply because he was a Vaishnava. By your mercy I can now understand the truth about Ramananda Raya. In talking with him, you also will acknowledge his greatness."
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.7.61-67)

Srila Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati has commented as follows (2.7.63): "To superficial understanding, Ramananda Raya was not a sannyasi wearing a loincloth. In common understanding, those who are courtiers engaged in government service are materialistic, but Ramananda Raya was in fact a learned person who was a de facto sannyasi, as a perfected human being. Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya had previously been able to recognize his natural qualitie as a

Vaishnava, even though he himself was not a Vaishnava at that time. When he took to devotional service by the grace of the Lord, he reconsidered his opinion of Ramananda and realized the extent of his qualifications, calling him an adhikari rasika-bhakta -- the most highly qualified authority in the matters of devotional sentiment."

Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya was the incarnation of Brihaspati and the court pandita of King Prataparudra. He was so learned that even though a householder, he had sannyasis as his disciples. Nevertheless, he had been unable to recognize that Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was the Supreme Lord himself, nor was he able to identify Ramananda Raya as his most intimate associate. If he was unable to do so, then how much more difficult it would be for others! No one is able to understand the glories of the Lord and his devotees without being blessed by their mercy.

Mental speculation is of no value for understanding the nature of the Supreme Lord. Without the Lord’s mercy, no person can come to know him. One to whom the Lord gives even a slight drop of mercy is able to understand his nature. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.6.82-3)

Mahaprabhu meets Ramananda

Mahaprabhu set off to the south, blessing the inhabitants of the land by bestowing devotion to Krishna on them. He visited Kurma-sthana, delivering the Brahmin also named Kurma, and giving everyone the order to preach devotional service to Krishna. He saved Vasudeva Vipra and then went on the Simhacalam where he danced before the deity of Jiyari Nrisingha. Then he went on to the Godavari River, which in his vision was the Yamuna, and the woods on its banks, Vrindavan. He joyfully crossed the river and came to the place known as Kabhura, where he bathed in the river, hoping to meet Ramananda Raya. Coming out of the water, he sat down and waited for him.

At the same time, Ramananda Raya passed by with a fanfare. When he saw Mahaprabhu’s supernatural form, he descended from his palanquin and paid his obeisances to the Lord. Though Mahaprabhu recognized him, he asked him to identify himself. Ramananda replied that he was nothing but a lowly shudra

servant. When the Lord heard him speak in this humble manner, he immediately embraced him. Both the Lord and his servant felt the onset of divine emotions and the both experienced the eight ecstatic transformations of prema. The Brahmins who were accompanying Ramananda were astonished to see such a display. They thought,

"This sannyasi is as effulgent as the brahmajyoti. Why is he crying while embracing this shudra? The governor Ramananda is a scholar and normally very serious. Why has become so emotional upon being touched by this sannyasi, as though intoxicated?"
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.8.26-7)

Seeing that there were outsiders present, the Lord controlled his emotions and told Ramananda that he had been told by Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya to seek him out. Ramananda replied with humility,

This is the proof of your mercy to Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya: you have touched me, an untouchable, simply due to his love for you. What a difference exists between us -- you are the Supreme Lord, Narayan himself, and I, a government servant interested in materialistic activities. Indeed, I am the lowest amongst men of the fourth caste. Even so, you were not contemptuous of my touch, neither did you fear the Vedic injunctions which forbid one to even look upon a shudra. Your mercy makes you touch me, even though this activity is condemned by scripture and by society. Who can understand your intention, for you are the Supreme Lord himself.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.8.34-7)

Though the Brahmins had never shown the slightest interest in bhakti, they too were influenced by the sight of the Lord and began to chant the names of Krishna, their voices tremulous with divine ecstasy. Ramananda Raya said aloud that Mahaprabhu was the Supreme Lord, both in akriti, or form, and in prakriti, or nature. The Lord immediately responded in a way that would show the greatness of his devotee:

The Lord said, "You are a great devotee, indeed you are the best amongst them. All those who behold you are immediately affected so that their hearts melt. What to speak of others --- I am a mayavadi sannyasi, yet I feel the onset of Krishna prema when I touch you."
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.8.44-5)

The Lord Listens to Ramananda Speak

When Mahaprabhu told him of his desire to hear Krishna-katha from his lips, Ramananda suggested that he stay for a week or so at his house so that his own wicked mind could be pacified and purified. The two then each went their way to finish their duties, returning to the same spot in the evening. Ordinarily, it is seen that a devotee asks the questions and the Lord answers. This time, however, the roles were reversed and the Lord asked Ramananda to clarify certain spiritual truths and then empowered him to respond. Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami makes this explicit in the verse which opens the eighth chapter of the Madhya-lila:

sancarya ramabhidha-bhakta-meghe
svabhakti-siddhanta-cayamritani
gaurabdhir etair amuna vitirnais
taj-jnatva-ratnalayatam prayati

Gauranga is like the ocean of spiritual truths; he filled the cloud named Ramananda with the nectar of the purest conclusions of devotion to himself. Ramananda then rained down that same nectar on the very ocean from which it had come, producing the jewels of transcendental knowledge.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.8.1)

A person who has not taken shelter of the Lord may try to understand the Supreme Truth by using empirical means, without achieving any success. Indeed, he will fall into confusion and be unable to understand the words of the Lord.

Mahaprabhu asked Ramananda Raya to explain to him, with evidence from the scriptures, the ultimate goal of life. Ramananda started his response by explaining that devotion to Vishnu was the ultimate aim of human achievement, or sadhya. In this theistic conception, he described progressive path of different practices leading to that goal, starting from the practice of varnashrama dharma, offering the fruits of one's activities to Krishna (karmarpana), renunciation of prescribed duties (karma-tyaga) and devotion mixed with knowledge (jnana-mishra-bhakti), offering the scriptural basis for each step. Mahaprabhu rejected each proposal, however, saying that it was superficial or external, for none of these practices were potential means for achieving the pure devotion which he

had come to give.

By starting this conversation with Ramananda Raya with varnashrama dharma , Mahaprabhu showed that all activities which ignore the Vedic principles or go against them are to be completely rejected. When responding to each of Ramananda's suggestings, Mahaprabhu did not say, "Absolutely not!", he rather used the words, eho bahya, "This too is peripheral." The idea is that one must first give up activities which are outside the scope of the Vedic standard. Once one is fixed in these principles, one can progressively gain the qualifications to proceed through each of the various steps described by Ramananda. This holds true even though bhakti itself is completely independent and may manifest in an individual through the association of saintly persons despite one's having no prior qualifications or having gone through these prior steps.

When Ramananda Raya finally answered Mahaprabhu's question by saying "Pure devotional service without any tinge of speculative knowledge (jnana-shunya-bhakti) is the means to achieve the supreme perfection.", Mahaprabhu finally accepted his conclusion. From this point on, Mahaprabhu's teachings actually begin. The words jnana-shunya are meant to completely eradicate any consciousness of the impersonal aspect of the supreme, and not the kind of knowledge of relationships (sambandha-jnana) which is favorable to the attainment of pure devotional service.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur writes in his Amrita-pravaha-bhashya, "The purport is that sacrificing the results of one's actions is better than merely engaging in one's prescribed duties according to the varnashrama dharma ; the renunciation of fruitive activities is better than simply giving up the fruits; better than this is the cultivation of knowledge mixed with devotional service. However, despite this progressive improvement in spirituality through these stages, they are all superficial because these four kinds of practices have no power to achieve pure devotion, or shuddha bhakti. The devotion known as aropa-siddha , by which is meant adding a devotional veneer as an afterthought, or sanga-siddha, by which is meant devotion by associating a fruitive activity with some devotional act, are never to be considered pure devotional service. Pure devotional service is Svarupa-siddha bhakti, i.e., it is devotion both in form and in intent. It is entirely different from these other activities which have only a superficial relationship to devotional service. The characteristics of shuddha bhakti are that it is activity executed uniquely for the pleasure of Krishna, devoid of any material desires, it is not hidden by the presence of fruitive intent or knowledge of brahman. This is

the consciousness that is the ultimate goal of spiritual practice, for though it is practiced by an aspiring devotee, it is realized when he reaches perfection of his practice." (2.8.68)

As long as Ramananda Raya suggested anything other than following in the footsteps of the great devotees and listening to Krishna-katha from his lips, Mahaprabhu kept saying, "This is irrelevant." Therefore it is to be understood that pure devotion starts from the moment one begins to hear about the activities and teachings of Lord Krishna from the lips of a pure devotee. From this point, Ramananda Raya described the various stages of pure devotion, the moods of neutrality, servitude, friendship, parenthood and conjugal love. From there, he went on to describe Radha’s love as being supreme as well as both Radha and Krishna’s characteristics. Then Mahaprabhu asked questions like "What is the essence of education?", "What kind of fame is best for the living being?". All these things have been extensively described in the eighth chapter of Chaitanya Charitamrita’s Madhya-lila. In order to avoid deviating too much from the account of Ramananda’s life, we will not go into these matters any further here.

Ramananda’s Perception of the Lord’s Identity

The identity of the Lord cannot remain hidden to his devotee. Ramananda was able to recognize the Lord for who he was. He said,

"First I saw you as an ordinary sannyasi. Now I see that you are actually a dark-skinned cowherd boy. I see a golden puppet standing in front of you; its golden effulgence covers your entire body." (Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.8.268-9)

Mahaprabhu made an effort to dissimulate his identity when he heard this, saying that Raya Ramananda was a great devotee and thus saw Krishna everywhere. Ramananda, however, clearly stated the primary purpose of the Lord’s incarnation. Mahaprabhu was pleased with his insightful realization and he displayed his form as the combination of rasa-raja ("the king of the devotional sentiments") Krishna and the incarnation of maha-bhava ("the supreme devotional mood"), Srimati Radharani. When he saw this amazing combined form of the Lord, Ramananda Raya fell to the ground in a faint. When the Lord touched him, he regained consciousness.

They remained together for ten days, enjoying discussions of Krishna conscious

topics. Before Mahaprabhu continued on his southern pilgrimage, he asked Ramananda to abandon his involvement with government service and join him in Puri when he returned.

When Mahaprabhu completed his sojourn in southern India, he met with Ramananda once again on the banks of the Godavari. He showed him the two books, Krishna-karnamrita and Brahma-samhita, which he had found in his travels, and which substantiated all that Ramananda Raya had said in their previous conversations. Ramananda Raya copied the two manuscripts himself. The Lord remained another week with Ramananda, enjoying the pleasure of discussions about Krishna before heading back to Nilachala. Ramanada refused to go with the Lord immediately as he was obliged to wait for the King's permission and also would need to take care of his personal affairs. He promised to join the Lord in Puri as soon as he was able.

Ramananda Comes to Puri

When the Lord arrived in Puri, he made his permanent residence in the house of Kashi Mishra. King Prataparudra had heard about the Lord and was very enthusiastic about meeting him. Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya had assured him that once the Lord had returned from his southern pilgrimage, he would somehow or other arrange for him to have darshan. Unfortunately, no matter how hard Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya tried to convince him, the Lord insisted that he would not look upon a king. Thus all attempts to arrange a meeting met with failure.

When the King heard that Ramananda wished to return to Puri in order to be close to Mahaprabhu, he was quite happy to grant him permission. He allowed him to leave his duties in the government and continued to pay him a pension. Thus Ramananda first met with the King in Cuttack, and then in Puri, before going to Kashi Mishra's home to meet with the Lord himself. Ramananda knew just how eager the King was to encounter Mahaprabhu, but rather than bringing up the matter directly, he simply glorified the king, telling him Mahaprabhu much faith he had in the him, how deep was his devotion to Krishna, and how kind he had been to free Ramananda from his governmental duties so that he could serve the Lord directly. By recounting the King's virtues in this way, he was able to melt the Lord's resolve.

In the meantime, Nityananda Prabhu had sent one of the Lord’s loincloths to King Prataparudra as a consolation. Though this gave the King a great deal of joy, his desire to meet the Lord simply increased and he asked Ramananda to intercede on his behalf and make some kind of arrangement. When Ramananda finally approached the Lord directly, asking him to be compassionate toward the King, the Lord was not able to refuse him directly. He agreed that the King was no ordinary materialistic person, but nevertheless, the very title raja was a type of contamination that he could not overlook. So he agreed to allow the king’s son to come and see him, as the son and father are, in a sense, one.

Mahaprabhu said, "There may be much milk in a big pot, but if it is contaminated by a drop of liquor, it is untouchable. The King certainly possesses all good qualities, but everything has been ruined simply by his possesion of the kingly title. If you are still very eager for the King to meet with me, then you can bring his son in his place. The scripture states that one’s self is reborn in the son, therefore if his son comes, it will be equal to his meeting with Me." Ramananda Raya then went to inform the King about his talks with the Lord, and, according to his request, brought the King's son to see Him. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.12.53-7)

Appreciating Rupa’s Plays

Rupa Manjari is the follower of the sakhis Lalita and Vishakha, who are not different from Ramananda Raya. Rupa Goswami discussed the subject of his two plays, Lalita-madhav a and Vidagdha-madhava with Ramananda. When Ramananda asked to hear a verse about the play’s

anarpita-carim cirat karunayavatirnah kalau
samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasam sva-bhakti-shriyam
harih purata-sundara-dyuti-kadamba-sandipitah
sada hridaya-kandare sphuratu vah shacinandanah

The elevated, effulgent taste of sacred rapture
Is the wealth of devotional love;
The lord never gives it at any time;
Yet, out of his mercy in this age of quarrel,
To distribute this treasure to the world,
He has become incarnate in his golden form.

The son of sachi is like a lion;
May he dwell in the cave of your heart forever.

When Ramananda Raya heard this verse, he began to praise Rupa Goswami with what seemed like a thousand tongues. He said that Rupa could only have written such an accurate portrayal of such difficult concepts as a result of the Lord's mercy.

Pradyumna Mishra Meets Ramananda

In order to reveal the extent of his transcendental character and identity, Mahaprabhu sent Pradyumna Mishra, who was born in an upper-class Brahmin family to Ramananda to be instructed, even though Ramananda was not of such high caste. Pradyumna Mishra was born in Sylhet, but later made his permanent home in Orissa. He came one day to Mahaprabhu asking to hear some Hari-katha. Mahaprabhu replied with great humility that he was not qualified to speak on elevated matters of sacred rapture, and sent him to meet Ramananda Raya.

At that time, Ramananda Raya was in the Jagannath-vallabha gardens, engaged in preparing two young deva-dasis for a play which was to be given before Lord Jagannath. Not only was he training them in the songs that they would sing and in the dance they would perform, but also bathing, dressing and decorating them. The first time that Pradyumna Mishra came to see Ramananda, one of Ramananda's servants told him that he was busy doing this work and asked Mishra to sit outside and wait. None of Ramananda Raya's servants dared to interrupt him while he was busy preparing the performance which was to be given before Lord Jagannath. Only after he had finished the rehearsal and come outside did he learn that Pradyumna Mishra had come there to hear about Krishna from him.

Ramananda showed the Brahmin the appropriate respect and begged forgiveness for the long delay. Mishra realized that it was too late that day for his wish to be fulfilled and he returned home. Some days later, when Mahaprabhu saw Mishra, he asked him how the meeting with Ramananda had gone and what topics they had discussed. Pradyumna Mishra told him everything that had happened and told the Lord that some doubts had risen in his mind about Ramananda's activities. The Lord immediately took steps to erase these doubts from the Brahmin's mind. He began to glorify Ramananda's extraordinary character with

great force. He said:

"I am a sannyasi and I consider myself to be renounced. But if I even hear the name of a woman, what to speak of seeing one, I feel an effect on my mind and body. So who is not moved by the sight of a woman? Everyone listen to me. Let me tell you about Ramananda Raya, although they are so wonderful and uncommon that they really cannot be properly described.He personally serves Jagannath's young and beautiful devadasis in every possible way. He personally bathes and dresses them and decorates them with ornaments. While doing so, he naturally sees and touches the private parts of their bodies, but even so, his mind is never affected. He teaches the girls how to physically express all the moods of love, to be acted out before Jagannath Deva, but his mind and body are as steady as wood or stone. Indeed, it is amazing that even when he touches such young girls, his mind is not disturbed. Only Ramananda has the right to do such things, and seeing him do them, I can understand that his body is not material but has been completely transformed into a spiritual entity." (Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.5.35-42)

Mahaprabhu thus revealed Ramananda's amazing powers to Pradyumna Mishra, and through him, to the world. He told Pradyumna that he himself went to Ramananda to hear about Krishna, and he advised him to go a second time. This time, Pradyumna was able to hear Ramananda speak about Krishna in such depth and with such insight that he was astonished, so astonished in fact, that he began to dance in ecstasy.

Bhaktivinoda Thakur has written the following comment on the above pastime: "Raya Ramananda had composed a play which is known as Jagannath-vallabha-nataka . This play was performed in the Jagannath temple for the pleasure of Jagannath himself. The deva-dasis, or "virgins of the God", were girls who were given to the deity as his wives and they were trained up in performing just for the deity. In Orissan, they are now called maharis. Ramananda engaged two of these girls to play in his drama, directing them in how to play the emotions appropriate to the gopis. Since the two deva-dasis were playing the roles of chief gopis, Ramananda made no distinction between them and Krishna's beloved mistresses. He considered himself to be their maidservant, and in that spiritual identity, engaged in their service by teaching them to dance and sing for their Lord. Because Ramananda Raya knew himself to be one of Srimati Radharani's handmaidens, he was able to project the identity of his worshipable mistress on the two deva-dasis and this is why he was able to serve them in this most

intimate fashion without experiencing the disturbance of mundane sexual desire." (Amrita-pravaha-bhashya, 3.5.20)

Though a householder, Ramananda is not under the control of the six deadly sins (lust, anger, greed, illusion, intoxication and envy). Though a so-called materialistic person, he is qualified to instruct those in the renounced order of life. The Lord wished to reveal these qualities of Ramananda, and so he sent Pradyumna Mishra to listen to him speak about Krishna. The Lord knows very well how to make his devotees virtues public. He considers it to be to his personal profit to do so by using various stratagems. O devotees, listen carefully to yet another of the Lord’s characteristics: he manifests his own majestic nature, though these are usually hidden. He spreads real religious principles through a man from a lowly shudra in order to vanquish the false pride of so-called renunciants and learned scholars. He preached about devotional service, ecstatic love and the Absolute Truth by making Ramananda Raya, a grihastha born in a low family, the speaker, while he himself, an exalted Brahmin-sannyasi, and Pradyumna Mishra, a pure Brahmin, both listened and took lessons from him. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.5.80-85)

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur comments on these words from the Chaitanya Charitamrita as follows: "To materialistic vision, Ramananda Raya is a grihastha on the pravritti-marga, engaged in an active life in the world. He is not, it is clear, a self-controlled brahmachari, vanaprastha, or sannyasi. A materialistic householder is under the control of his senses and this is the basis of his involvement in worldly activities. A Vaishnava householder who has attained the transcendental state, however, is not at all on the same level, transcending the influences of the six deadly sins and standing aloof from the influence of the senses. Ramananda Raya accepted the householder state as his role in the pastimes of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Ordinary materialistic persons look upon him through glass that is tinted by their own desire for sense gratification and see him as one of their own, but in fact his mind had been totally spiritualized through being fixed on the supreme worshipable object. He was thus a Krishna-vishayi, one who seeks only the pleasure of Krishna’s senses and not his own. He was not an impersonalist or argumentative nihilist opposed to the Lord’s transcendental activities. Indeed, he possessed the power to transform the minds of such sannyasis who had abandoned sense gratification and were absorbed in the qualityless brahman without any appreciation for Krishna’s form and pastimes, and turn them away from their fundamentally materialistic conception of transcendence, attracting them to the practice of devotional service through

hearing and chanting about Krishna’s name, form and activities."

Other Activities in Puri

When Vallabha Bhatta came to Puri and came into contact with Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the Lord kept his own glories hidden from him because he knew him to be proud of his learning. He thus preferred to speak to Vallabha Bhatta about the qualifications of his entourage. At that time he said of Ramananda that he was expert both in the sambandha, or knowledge of the relationships between God, man and the universe, and the prayojana-tattva , or knowledge of life in the state of divine perfection. Furthermore, he indicated that he was the greatest connoisseur of the pure and sacred raptures of Vrindavan.

Ramananda Raya is the treasure house of divine sentiments. It was he who disclosed to me that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. No one can fully describe the extent of Ramananda’s spiritual power. Through him I was able to learn about the pure moods of the devotees of Vraja. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.7.23, 37)

Ramananda Raya had the same type of relationship with Mahaprabhu that Subala, Krishna’s friend and helper used to have in Vraja. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.6.9)

Ramananda Raya was also present in Nilachala when Hari Das Thakur passed away. Mahaprabhu praised Hari Das before the devotees led by Ramananda and Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya. (3.11.50)

Ramananda in the Lord’s Last Days

When the Lord was in his condition of divine ecstatic madness, he would sometimes disappear from his chambers, even though there were three barred doors through which he had to pass in order to go outside. Once he was found near the Lion’s Gate, his joints loosened and taking on a giant, distended form. He was be revived and returned to normal by loud singing of the Holy Names. On another occasion, he was found in the sand dunes which he had taken in his state of trance to be Govardhana. Once again, he was be pacified by sankirtan and returned to his home. On these occasions, Ramananda Raya was present

with Svarupa Damodar. Throughout the ten transformations of the Lord’s ecstatic madness (divyonmada) , Ramananda Raya would recite verses which were fit the Lord’s emotional state. In this way, he brought pleasure to the Lord.

Mahaprabhu remained in Nilachala in this way, passing the days and nights absorbed in the anxiety of separation from Krishna. Svarupa and Ramananda were always with him, bringing him ecstasy with their recitation of songs and verses appropriate to his mood. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.20.3-4)

... the Lord took Svarupa Damodar and Ramananda Raya by the shoulders and said, "Listen, Svarupa and Rama Raya! Tell me what I should do, where should I go in order to find Krishna. You can tell me the best thing to do." In this way, Gauranga would tell his tale of woe to Svarupa and Ramananda and they would console him in his grief. Svarupa would sing and Ramananda would recite Sanskrit verses, giving joy to the Lord with verses from Krishna Karnamrita, the songs of Vidyapati and Gita-Govinda. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.15.24-7)

Remaining in the company of Svarupa and Ramananda both day and night, Mahaprabhu ecstatically relished the songs of Chandi Das, Vidyapati and Ramananda Raya’s plays, as well as Krishna-Karnamrita and Gita-Govinda. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.2.77)

Ramananda Raya performed his bhajana in the Jagannath-vallabha gardens, a place which was very dear to Mahaprabhu also. As soon as the Lord entered within this garden, he would be overwhelmed by feelings of divine love. One day, while the Lord was there, he had a vision of Krishna under an ashoka tree. Then, the vision was suddenly lost to him, and Mahaprabhu fell to the ground in a faint.

The main park in Puri is the Jagannath-vallabha garden. The Lord entered there with his devotees. The trees and flower bushes were in bloom, and it seemed as though it was Vrindavan. The parrots, mynah birds, and cuckoos were singing their songs and the bees were all buzzing. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.19.79-80)

Wandering through the garden, he went from tree to tree. When he came to an ashoka tree, he suddenly saw Krishna standing there. The Lord started to run towards him, but Krishna laughed at him and disappeared. The Lord was stunned: he had found Krishna and then had lost him again. He lost consciousness and feel to the ground. (Chaitanya Charitamrita Antya 19.85-87)

Through Ramananda Raya and Sri Svarupa Damodar Goswami, Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu joyfully announced to the world that Harinama-sankirtan is the best means to attain love of God in this age of quarrel.

The Lord, in a wave of jubilation say, "Listen Svarupa Damodar and Ramananda Raya! In the age of Kali, Harinama sankirtan is the supreme means of deliverance. In the age of Kali, Krishna is to be worshiped by the congregational chanting of his Holy Names. This is the way that an intelligent person attains the lotus feet of Krishna. Through the chanting of the Holy Name, all of one’s sinful reactions are extinguished and all auspiciousness arises until finally one experiences the joys of love for Krishna." (Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.20.8-11)

There are two opinions about Ramananda Raya’s disappearance day: some people say Jyestha Krishna-pancami, others Vaishakhi Krishna-pancami.

Sri Rasikananda Deva Goswami

Rasikananda Deva Goswami was born in 1512 of the Saka era (1590 AD) in the village of Rohini or Rayni in the Midnapore district. This village is situated at the confluence of the Subarnarekha and Dolanga rivers. His father's name was Raja Achyutananda and his mother, Bhavani Devi. The Subarnarekha River crosses back and forth across the present-day Bengal-Orissa border. Midnapore district used to be a part of the Orissan kingdom. Raja Achyutananda was an Orissan of the Karana caste, the equivalent of the Kayasthas in Bengal. A Vaishnava is beyond the material qualities and should not be judged in terms of his caste origins. Achyutananda and Rasikananda were born in the Karana caste in order to bless it.

We can assume that Rasikananda was a manjari in Krishna lila. Though his spiritual master Shyamananda had himself been initiated by Hriday Chaitanya

Goswami, who worshipped the Lord in the mood of friendship, he later took shelter of the conjugal mood due to the association of the Vraja devotees led by Jiva Goswami. Shyamananda thus initiated Rasikananda into the worship of Radha and Krishna.

Rasikananda was also known by the name Rasika Murari. Mother Jahnava's disciple Nityananda Das wrote in his Prema-vilasa that Shyamananda had two principle disciples, one named Rasikananda, the other Murari, both of whom lived in Rayni. But Narahari Chakravarti indicates clearly in Bhakti-ratnakara that both names refer to the same individual.

In the village of Rayni lived the famous son of Achyutananda. He had two names: Rasikananda and Murari. Thus he was also known as Rasika-Murari. He became learned in the scriptures in his childhood. (Bhakti-ratnakara 15.27-8)

Rasika Murari Meets Shyamananda Prabhu

Rasika Murari was anxious to find a spiritual master who could give him guidance on the mystical path. One day while in Ghantashila, he went to a solitary place to meditate. He had just entered into a very deep trance when he heard a voice from an unseen source say, "Murari! You need be anxious no longer. Your guru is Shyamananda and you will meet him here very shortly. Take shelter of him and your life will be successful."

Upon hearing the divine message, Murari began chanting the name of Shyamananda on his beads with joyful enthusiasm. He spent the entire night crying out of eager expectation to meet his guru, until finally at the end of the night, he had a dream vision of Shyamananda Prabhu who said to him, "Don't worry any longer, for you will meet me on this very day."

At dawn, Rasika Murari was on the lookout for his guru, when he saw the tall figure of Shyamananda approaching him, as effulgent as the sun. Surrounded by disciples like Kishor Das, he was dancing in a state of absorption in divine love while chanting the names of Nityananda and Chaitanya. Rasika Murari had been waiting anxiously for so long to encounter his guru that he immediately fell down at his feet. Shyamananda affectionately lifted him up and embraced him. Then, after giving him the Radha-Krishna mantra, he offered him up to Chaitanya and Nityananda Prabhus. This whole story demonstrates how we can

find a guru through sincere prayers.

Rasikananda Becomes a Potent Preacher

Rasikananda Deva Goswami fully committed himself in body, mind and soul to the service of his guru. Indeed, he served him so well that in a short time he was recognized as Shyamananda's chief disciple, a very powerful preacher and initiating guru himself. In fact, it is a truism that a good disciple becomes a good teacher. A spiritual master may have innumerable followers who call him their guru, but are disciples in name only. Only a true disciple who has dedicated himself completely to his spiritual mater is imbued with all the powers of the guru. Shyamananda invested Rasikananda with such spiritual power that he was able to convert many criminals, atheists, Muslims, and other fallen spirit souls to the path of devotion, bestowing the jewel of prema upon them all.

On one occasion, a wicked Muslim tried to silence Rasika Murari by having him attacked by an intoxicated elephant, but Rasikananda was able to transform even the elephant into a disciple and engage him in the service of Vishnu and the Vaishnavas. All who witnessed this amazing event were overwhelmed with astonishment at Rasika Murari's spiritual power and the evil Muslim zamindar himself came and surrendered to him.

Shyamananda turned the service of his personal Govinda deity in Gopiballabhpur over to Rasikananda. He delivered unlimited living beings without any consideration of their caste or religious background. Rasikananda remained constantly intoxicated in Harinam sankirtana. Who will not be overcome with emotion on reciting his virtues? (Bhakti-ratnakara 15.81-6)

The Prema-vilasa corroborates this account in the 19th chapter, "He delivered many criminals and Muslims."

The Raja of Mayurbhanj in Orissan, Vaidyanath Bhanj, was also attracted to the transcendental power of Rasikananda and became his disciple. Other important disciples were Ganapati, the zamindar of Patashpur in Midnapore, Sri Bhima and Srikara, zamindars of Dharenda, and Ahmed Beg, the son-in-law of Ibrahim Khan, the governor of Orissa.

Rasikananda Deva Goswami wrote a number of works, including Syamananda-

staka, Bhakta-Bhagavatastaka, and Kunjakeli-dvadasaka.

Rasikananda's Disappearance

It is said that just prior to Rasikananda's disappearance in AD 1652, he went with seven of his disciples to a village named Bansdaha near Jaleswar. Mahaprabhu passed through the village when traveling to Puri with Nityananda. (Chaitanya Bhagavata 3.2.263-4)

Rasikananda and his party walked from there to Remuna, chanting kirtan the whole way. When they arrived in the courtyard of the famous Khirchora Gopinath temple, Rasikananda suddenly merged into the body of the Gopinath deity. His disciples also left their bodies in the same place. Rasika Murari's flower samadhi and those of his seven associates are still maintained in the courtyard of the Khirchora Gopinath temple. An annual festival lasting twelve days is held in Remuna to celebrate his disappearance. This takes place on Siva-caturdasi in the month of Magh.

Visvambharananda Deva Goswami, the author of the celebrated Astikya-darsana, was Rasikananda's descendant.

Sri Rupa Goswami's Siksha

Through Rupa Goswami, Mahaprabhu taught the world about Krishna's Vrindavan pastimes and the process for attaining Krishna in Vrindavan. Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami writes, "Through the mercy of Sanatan I have learned the devotional doctrines, while by the grace of Rupa I have been able to discover the extensiveness of the divine aesthetics of devotion." (Chaitanya Charitamrita 1.5.203)
The Lord taught about sacred rapture and Vraja's pastimes of love through Rupa

Goswami. Who can effectively describe the subtleties of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's lila? (Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.5.87)

vrndavaniyam rasa-kelivartam
kalena luptam nija-saktim utkah |
sancarya rupe vyatanot punah sa
prabhor vidhau prag iva loka-srstim ||

Just as the Lord enlightened the heart of Lord Brahma with the details of the creation and thus made the manifestation of the cosmos possible, so did Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu eagerly impregnate the heart of Rupa Goswami with spiritual potency so that he could revive Krishna's Vrindavan pastimes which had almost been lost to memory. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.19.1)
While in Prayag, Mahaprabhu gave Rupa the direct order to write Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu. This has been stated by Rupa himself in the introductory verses to that book:

hrdi yasya preramaya pravartito'ham varaka-rupo' pi |
tasya hareh pada-kamalam vande caitanya-devasya ||

I worship the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, known as Lord Chaitanya-deva, for by his inspiration I have set out to write this book even though I am nothing but a ignorant wretch. (Brs 1.1.2)

Particularly relevant in this connection is Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur's commentary on the importance of studying and writing books as an element of devotional practice: "The lives of the Goswamis were exemplary in their renunciation. Sometimes they would engage in chanting the holy names of the Lord, sometimes they would worship him by writing books on divine aesthetics, and sometimes they would remember or glorify Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

There is an idea which has some currency amongst the prakrta-sahajiyas that devotional practice entails the renunciation of studying and writing devotional scriptures, indeed that any kind of scriptural study should be stopped so that one can attain to a state of ignorance. Those who follow in the footsteps of Rupa Goswami have no patience with such ideas. However, if a devotional practitioner studies or writes devotional scriptures for the sake of making money through which to satisfy his material senses or attain material fame, respect or any of the

other insignificant and superficial goals which are classed as distractions or weeds in the garden of devotional service, then he will not attain the auspicious results which are the real fruit such activity. A real Rupanuga has no fruitive ambition for such petty results." (Anubhasya, 2.19.131)

When Mahaprabhu was giving Rupa the outline for his book on sacred rapture, he described the characteristics of the different mellows and showed him how to get a taste of the fathomless ocean of sacred rapture, he pointed out how difficult it was to attain devotional service to Krishna. The jiva or living entity is an atomic spark of conscious energy.

There are countless jivas, who are divided into two categories--those which are mobile and those which are stationary. Those which have mobility are again divided into three: those which move on the land, in the air or in the water. Amongst those who live on the land, a small number are human beings, of which only a minority accept the Vedic principles. Outcastes such as Pulindas, Mlecchas, Savaras and Buddhists are in the majority. Of those who accept the Vedas, some do so in name only and engage in sinful activity. Those who practice the Vedic principles are in the minority. Those who are engaged in religious practices toward some fruitive end form the majority in this group.

Amongst millions of such karma-nistha followers of the Veda, one person may perhaps attain the level of spiritual knowledge; yet only one of many millions of such jnanis will be an actual liberated soul. And out of millions of liberated souls, it will still be difficult to find a devotee of Krishna. Devotion to Krishna which is thus so rare can take birth when a certain merit is attained through great good fortune. The seed to the devotional creeper comes through the mercy of the Lord and his devotee. The creeper of spontaneous ecstatic devotion does not flower anywhere within this world, not even in Vaikuntha in the spiritual world, but only in Vrndavan at Krishna's lotus feet. Krishna's feet are like the wish-fulfilling tree around which the vine of devotion wraps itself and bears fruit. This is described in a most clear and wonderful manner by Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami in Chaitanya Charitamrita:

After wandering through this entire universe, birth after birth, some fortunate souls receive the seed of devotion (bhakti-lata-bija) by the mercy of Krishna and the guru. Upon receiving the seed of devotional service, one should take care of it by becoming a gardener and sowing it in his heart. If he waters the seed gradually by the process of sravana and kirtan [hearing and chanting], the seed

will begin to sprout. As one waters the bhakti-lata-bija, the seed sprouts, and the creeper gradually increases to the point where it penetrates the walls of this universe and goes beyond the Viraja River between the spiritual world and the material world. It passes through the Brahma-loka, the Brahman effulgence until it finally reaches the spiritual sky and the spiritual planet Goloka Vrindavan where it takes shelter of the desire tree of the lotus feet of Krishna. There the creeper expands greatly and produces the fruit of love for Krishna, while the gardener continues to regularly sprinkle the creeper with the water of hearing and chanting here in the material world.

An offense to the Vaishnavas is like a mad elephant that uproots or breaks the creeper, causing its leaves to dry up.

The gardener must therefore take care to protect the creeper by making a fence around it so that the elephant of offenses may not enter. Even so, unwanted creepers, such as the weeds of desire for material enjoyment or release from the world, may grow along with the creeper of devotional service. Such weeds are countless in their variety. Some examples are forbidden activity, faultfinding and duplicity, causing suffering to other creatures, seeking wealth, adulation or mundane importance. All these weeds grow alongside the main creeper as one waters it, causing its growth to be curtailed.

As soon the devotee sees one of these weeds growing beside the original creeper, he must cut it down instantly. Then the real bhakti-lata can grow nicely all the way to Vrindavan where it will find shelter under the lotus feet of Krishna. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.19.151-61)

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur has commented on this passage in his Anubhasya: "Through the act of watering the creeper of devotional service by hearing and chanting, weeds may also grow which results in the growth of the bhakti-lata being stifled. If one does not avoid bad association, which is the only way to be free of offenses while hearing and chanting, then one becomes attached to sense gratification, the idea of liberation from material bondage, various mystic achievements, or the practice of deception. One may also become addicted to the illicit association of women or practice other false manifestations of devotion practiced by the prakrta-sahajiyas or a dweller of the five places given by Pariksit to Kali, namely wherever there is gambling, intoxication, prostitution, animal slaughter and the accumulation of gold.

He starts to take the Vaishnavas to be members of a particular race or caste, he finds dishonest ways of collecting money, or makes a show of practicing spiritual life in seclusion while secretly harboring desires for fame and adulation. Or one's desire for mundane reputation may result in his making compromises with nondevotees, compromising one's philosophy or spiritual life, or becoming a supporter of the hereditary caste system by professing discipleship to a so-called guru who opposes Vishnu and the Vaishnavas. The sum and substance of these aberrant paths is that one becomes intoxicated in the gratification of one's own senses and, in order to attain these superficial and destructible ends, in short, anything besides pure devotion, one presents oneself as a great saintly person or as a religious person in order to accumulate followers. None of these things is useful in attaining pure devotional service to Krishna.

"If one uproots the various weeds as soon as one sees them beginning to sprout, then the creeper of devotional service will be able to grow as far as Goloka Vrindavan where it will give forth transcendental fruits. If not, one will end up being cut off from the devotional life and, remaining in the material world, whether in the higher or lower planets, will have to suffer its vagaries." (Anubhasya, 2.19.160-1)

There are twelve devotional sentiments. The five primary sentiments are those of peacefulness, servitude, friendship, parenthood, and erotic love. The seven secondary sentiments are humor, astonishment, heroism, compassion, anger, disgust and fear.

The five primary sentiments remain permanently within the devotee's heart, while the secondary sentiments are adventitious, appearing only when there is cause. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.19.188)

The secondary rasas act as supporting elements for the primary sentiments, coming and going when propitious circumstances arise.

After serving their function, they again disappear, whereas the primary sentiments are permanently ensconced in the devotee's heart.

In his teachings to Rupa Goswami, Mahaprabhu established that of the five primary rasas, the divine sentiment of conjugal love is foremost. The characteristics of santa-rasa abandonment of other desires and steady attachment

to Krishna. Over and above these characteristics, the possessor of the serving mood has his service, the friend has an intimacy, while the parent has a sense of being the protector. The devotee in madhura-rasa has all these qualities with the addition of serving with her own body. Just as all the qualities of the other elements starting with the ether are added together to be united in earth, so are all the qualities of the other devotional moods united in the mood of erotic love. Since all the sentiments are present in madhura-rasa, it is the best.

Rupa Goswami's samadhi temple can be found in the courtyard of the Radha Damodar temple in Vrindavan. This is also where he performed his bhajana at the end of his life. Other places consecrated to Rupa's memory in the Vraja area include his place of worship near Nandagrama, called Terikadamba. In this place, Radha came in disguise to give Rupa milk, rice and sugar so that he could cook a sweet-rice preparation for Sanata n Goswami. When Sanatan tasted the sweet rice, he felt divine ecstasies invade his body. Upon learning how he had received the ingredients, however, Sanatan forbad Rupa to ever cook sweet rice again, so that Radharani would not have to go to any trouble on his behalf.

Rupa Goswami's pastimes in this world came to an end in the month of Bhadra, on the twelfth day of the waxing moon, the day after Jhulana Ekadasi.

Sri Shyamananda Prabhu

Sri Shyamananda Prabhu was a servant of a servant of Subala in Krishna-lila. He was the disciple of Hridayananda or Hriday Chaitanya, who was a disciple of Gauri Das Pandit. Gauri Das was Subala in Krishna-lila.

yam loka bhuvi kirtayanti hridayanandasya shishyam priyam

sakhye shri-subalasya yam bhagavatah preshthanushishyam tatha
sa shriman rasikendra-mastaka-manish citte mamaharnisham
shri-radhapriya-narma-marmasu rucim sampadayan bhasatam

Sri Shyamananda was known in this world as Hridayananda's dear disciple; he was the grand-disciple of Subala sakha, the most dear friend of the Supreme Lord; he was the crest-jewel of the enjoyers of sacred rapture. May he appear day and night in my mind, bringing an appreciation for the essence of the joys of the beloved of Sri Radha.
(Shyamananda-shataka)

Shyamananda Prabhu was born on the full moon day of Chaitra in 1456 of the Shaka era (1534 AD) in the town of Dharenda Bahadurpura, which is near the Kharigapura railway station in Medinipura. His father was Sri Krishna Mandal and his mother, Durika. Krishna Mandal's home town was Dandeshvara which lies on the banks of the Suvarnarekha River. The following statement is found in the Gaudiya Vaishnava Abhidhana: "Sri Krishna Mandal used to live in a place called Ambuwa, near Dandeshvara. He formerly lived in Gauda (the part of Bengal which lies on the banks of the Bhagirathi River) and only later moved to Dandeshvara, is just across the present-day border in Orissa. Shyamananda's disciples have established five principle seats in the towns of Dharenda, Bahadurapura, Rayani, Gopiballabhapura, and Nrisinghapura."

Shyamananda Prabhu was born in the Sadgopa subcaste, which fits in the category of jala-cala, i.e., Brahmins are permitted to take water touched by its members. Of course, a Vaishnava is beyond the material qualities and may take birth in a family of any race or caste. If anyone thinks badly of Vaishnavas or judges them on the basis of their race or caste is destined for hell.

arcye shiladhir gurushu naramatir vaishnave jati-buddhir
vishnor va vaishnavanam kali-mala-mathane padatirthe'mbubuddhih
shrivishnor namni mantre sakala-kalushahe shabda-samanya-buddhir
vishnau sarveshvareshe tad-itara-samadhir yasya va naraki sah

Anyone who considers the deity to be nothing but stone, the guru to be an ordinary human being, or the Vaishnava to be a member of a particular caste or race, who takes the holy water which has washed Vishnu or the Vaishnava's feet and can destroy all the sins of the age of Kali, to be ordinary water, who thinks that the name or mantra of Vishnu, which destroys all evils, is the same as any

other sound, or who takes Vishnu to be equal to anything other than him, has a hellish nature.
(Padma-purana)

One who takes birth in a low-class family is not disqualified from performing devotional service, nor is one who born in a pure, high-class brahmanical family automatically qualified for such service. Whoever engages in the worship of the Lord is a great person; one who does not worship is rejected.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.4.66-7)

na me bhaktash caturvedi mad-bhaktah shvapacah priyah
tasmai deyam tato grahyam sa ca pujyo yatha hy aham

Simply being a knower of the four Vedas does not make someone my devotee. An outcaste who is my devotee is dear to me. One should exchange gifts and food, etc., with such a devotee for he is verily as worshipable as I.
(Quoted in Haribhaktivilasa.)

Prior to Shyamananda's birth, his parents had lost several children in childbirth and they vowed to surrender their next child to Vishnu if it survived. Having suffered so much grief in the loss of their previous children, they first named Shyamananda Duhkhi, or "unhappy", to ward off further distress.

Shyamananda's parents Durika and Shrikrishna Mandala made their home in Dandeshvara, his. His father was the best of the Sadgopa caste, of impeccable character. Krishna was everything to him and Krishna's devotees very dear. We cannot describe the virtues of his parents for fear of increasing the volume of this book. They had previously lived in Dharenda and Bahadurapura and some people say that Shyamananda's birth took place there. Nothing could stop his birth, for he came after many other children had been still-born to his parents. Because of their previous losses, his parents brought him up in sadness and so they called him Duhkhi.
(Bhakti-ratnakara 1.351-5, 359)

Shyamananda Prabhu's parents performed the appropriate rituals when the time came: the first eating of solid food, the cutting of hair, etc. As he grew older, he studied Sanskrit grammar, etc. His parents were overjoyed to see his talents and his religious proclivity. After having carefully listened to the glories of Gauranga and Nityananda from devotees, he was able to repeat them to others. When

listening to the activities of Gaura-Nitai or those of Radha and Krishna, tears would flow in waves from his eyes. He also devotedly served his parents and they told him to get initiated so that he could fully commit himself to the service of the Lord. Duhkhi agreed and told them that he wished to take diksha from Hriday Chaitanya, the disciple of Nityananda and Gauranga's associate, Gauri Das Pandit. When going to Kalna for that purpose, he would also have the good fortune to see the Ganges and to bathe in it His parents happily gave him permission to go there.

When Duhkhi arrived in Ambika Kalna, he threw himslf at the feet of Hriday Chaitanya, who upon learning his identity, happily gave him Krishna-mantra and named him Krishna Das. From then on Duhkhi was known as Duhkhi Krishna Das. Hriday Chaitanya ordered him to go to Vrindavan to engage in bhajana. Though he did not like being separated from his gurudeva, Duhkhi Krishna Das set off for Vraja, first visiting Nabadwip and other places in Gaudamandala where he sought the blessings of the Vaishnavas. Finally, after spending much time on pilgrimage, he finally arrived in Vrindavan where he became completely absorbed in the worship of Radha and Shyamasundar.

In Vrindavan, Duhkhi Krishna Das studied the Vaishnava scriptures under Sri Jiva Goswami, who was the leading scholar of the sampradaya. When Hriday Chaitanya heard of the enthusiasm with which Duhkhi Krishna Das was leading the devotional life in Vraja, he wrote a letter to Jiva Goswami in which he said that Duhkhi should consider Jiva to be an extension of himself. Jiva gave titles to his three most prominent students, Srinivas, Narottama and Duhkhi Krishna Das, bestowing Shyamananda on the latter. The reasoning behind this name was that he brought great joy to Radha and Shyamasundar.

While in Vrindavan, he was given the name Shyamananda because he brought great joy to Shyamasundar. When Jiva saw his charming activities, he kept him nearby and instructed him in the Vaishnava scriptures.
(Bhakti-ratnakara 1.401-2)

Jiva Goswami sent Srinivas Acharya, Narottama Das Thakur and Shyamananda back to Bengal with the Vaishnava scriptures in 1504 of the Shaka era (1582-3 AD). The idea was to spread the teachings found in these books throughout Bengal and Orissa. The events which took place when Vira Hambira had the books stolen in Vishnupura have been related in the chapter on Srinivas Acharya.

Narottama went to northern Bengal and Shyamananda went to Orissa. Midnapore district was previously under the rule of the Orissan king. Today there is a branch Gaudiya Math in Midnapore city named the Shyamananda Gaudiya Math which is meant to preserve his holy memory.

Radharani's Special Mercy on Shyamananda

Even though Shyamananda Prabhu was Hriday Chaitanya's initiated disciple, his guru had entrusted him to the care of Jiva Goswami Prabhu. Through the association of Jiva and service to him, Shyamananda developed a taste for serving Radha and Krishna in the conjugal mood. Hriday Chaitanya Prabhu himself was a disciple of Gauri Das Pandit, who was one of the twelve Gopals, Subala sakha. He worshiped Gaura-Nitai in the mood of friendship. Those who think that Shyamananda committed an offense to his initiating spiritual master by abandoning his mood and trying to directly serve Krishna in a higher mood, are wrong. The mood of friendship is contained within the conjugal mood. If a disciple makes further progress in spiritual life it enhances the reputation of his teacher.

An extraordinary incident, which took place in Vrindavan prior to his being ordered by Jiva to return to Orissa, demonstrates how dear Shyamananda was to Radharani. One day, Shyamananda Prabhu was sweeping the Rasa-mandala in Vrindavan, absorbed in ecstatic trance. Suddenly, by Radharani's transcendental mercy, he found her ankle bracelet lying on the ground. In his excitement, he touched the ankle bracelet to his forehead, where it left a mark which is preserved to this day as the tilaka marking of the disciple descendants of Shyamananda. It is known as nupura-tilaka.

Shyamananda Prabhu's Preaching

Narottama Thakur and Shyamananda primarily preached the message of Mahaprabhu through kirtan. Srinivas sang kirtan in a style called Manohara-sahi, Narottama in Gariana-hati, and Shyamananda in Reneti. He would enchant the listeners with his heartfelt singing of kirtan. These styles of kirtan are no longer extant.

As a result of his preaching in Orissa, many Muslims also became Shyamananda's disciples. The most important of his innumerable disciples was Rasika Murari. Rasikananda was the son of Achyutananda, the zamindar of Rohini village. He had another name, Murari, and was thus most commonly known as Rasika Murari. He was a very powerful preacher and his fame is still widespread through the villages of Orissa. A list of some of Shyamananda's prominent disciples is given in the Bhakti-ratnakara:

Shyamananda made disciples all over the place. A person can be purified by hearing their names: Radhananda, Purushottam, Manohara, Cintamani, Balabhadra, Jagadishvara, Uddhava, Akrura, Madhuvana, Govinda, Jagannath, Gadadhara, Anandananda, and Radhamohana. Shyamananda was constantly immersed in the joys of kirtan in the association of these disciples. Poets have described his wonderful pastimes for the pleasure of everyone.
(Bhakti-ratnakara 15.62-66)

Other than these disciples, Shyamananda converted a yogi named Damodar. Narahari Chakravarti has written the following account of that conversion:

There was a practitioner of yoga named Damodar. Shyamananda mercifully flooded him with devotional rasa. After becoming Shyamananda's disciple, Damodar cried and chanted the names of Nitai-Chaitanya. Who could remain untouched by his ecstatic absorption. He danced, crying out "bhakti is the best of all!" After delivering Damodar, Shyamananda continued to travel about, distributing the jewel of devotion to all.
(Bhakti-ratnakara 15.55-8)

Shyamananda put on a large festival at Dharenda with Rasika Murari and Damodar which is still remembered today. When he left the world, Shyamananda turned over the service of Govinda at Gopivallabhapura. Shyamananda's disciples and their descendants still worship his deity Radha-Shyamasundar in Vrindavan. This temple is still one of the principle pilgrimage sites in Vrindavan.

Shyamananda Prabhu lived the last part of his life in Nrisinghapura in Orissa where he continued preaching Vaishnavism. His earthly pastimes came to an end on the first day of the waning moon in the month of Asharh in 1552 of the Shaka era (1630 AD).

Sri Srivas Pandit

srivasa-pandita dhiman yah pura narado munih
parvatakhyo muni-varo ya asin narada-priyah
sri-rama-panditah sriman tat-kanistha-sahodarah
namnambika vraje dhatri stanya-datri sthita pura
saiveyam Malini namni srivassa-grhini mata

Srivas is Narada, who plays such an important part in Krishna's lila. Narada Muni's friend Parvata Muni appeared as Srivas' younger brother Ramai. Srivas' wife Malini Devi was Krishna's wet nurse in Vraja, Ambika.
(Gaura-ganoddesa-dipika 90)

Srivas Pandit hailed from Sylhet. He later came to live in Nabadwip where he made an immense contribution to Gauranga lila. From the Chaitanya Bhagavata and Chaitanya Charitamrita we learn that Srivas had three brothers living with him in Navadvipa: Srirama Pandit, Sripati Pandit and Srikanta or Srinidhi Pandit. All four were participants in Mahaprabhu's lila.

Gaudiya Vaisnava Abhidhana cites Prema-vilasa in saying that Srivas' father was a Vedic Brahmin of the name Sri Jaladhar Pandit. Srivas Pandit was the second of five sons. The eldest son, Sri Nalina Pandit, had a daughter named Narayani, the mother of the author of the Chaitanya Bhagavata, Vrindavan Das. Narayani's husband Vaikuntha Das Vipra died while she was pregnant with Vrindavan Das, so she left her husband's house in Kumarahatta (Halisahar) and came to live with Srivas in Nabadwip.

Kirtan Pastimes at Srivas Angan

After a night of kirtan at Srivas' house, when Mahaprabhu returned to external awareness, He would go with all the devotees to bathe in the Ganges. Sometimes

the devotees would ceremonially bathe the Lord at Srivas Angan. One of Srivas' servant girls named Dukhi would watch Mahaprabhu's ecstatic dancing with tears in her eyes. She also performed the service of filling jugs of water from the Ganges for Mahaprabhu's morning bath. One day, Mahaprabhu observed her devotion and was pleased; He changed her name from Dukhi ("unhappy") to Sukhi ("happy”).

Another day, Srivas' only son died while sankirtana was being performed in his house. Srivas was afraid that the sounds of mourning from the women's quarters would disturb Mahaprabhu while He was engaged in singing the Holy Names. So he went directly into the house and tried to quiet the women by explaining spiritual truths to them. When they still didn't stop their loud lamentations, Srivas threatened to throw himself into the river and drown if they did not stop making noise. This had the desired result.

Later on that night, however, the kirtan came to a stop and Mahaprabhu said, "Something doesn't seem right. Has some tragedy taken place in the pandit's house?" Srivas answered, "How can anything be wrong, when I have Your smiling face in my home?"

"However, some of the other devotees said, "Prabhu, Srivas' only son died in the evening about an hour after sunset."
Mahaprabhu asked, "Why did no one say anything before now?"
The devotees answered, "Lord, Srivas told us not to, because he was afraid that it would interfere with Your pleasure in kirtana."

Mahaprabhu said, "How could I ever abandon devotees who love Me to this extent!" and started to cry. After this, He went inside and sat down beside the child's dead body and brought him back to consciousness. He asked, "Child! Why do you want to leave the house of such a great devotee as Srivas?"

The dead child answered, "The few days that I was to spend in Srivas' house are over, and now I am following Your wishes in going elsewhere. I am a living being without any independence; I cannot go against Your wishes. Please be merciful to me that I never forget Your lotus feet, wherever I go."
When Srivas' family members heard the child speak such wisdom, they immediately forgot their distress and stopped mourning. Mahaprabhu said to Srivas, "From this day on, Nityananda and I will be your sons. We will never leave you."

[Excerpted from "Sri Chaitanya: His Life & Associates" by Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaj]

Sri Svarupa Damodar Goswami

The Lord accepted Shikhi Mahiti's sister as one of Radha's friends. In the entire world, there were only three and a half devotees who were so worthy. They were Svarupa Damodar Goswami, Ramananda Raya and Shikhi Mahiti. His sister was the half person.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.2.105-6)

Sri Svarupa Damodar Goswami was one of Mahaprabhu's three and a half most intimate associates. Elsewhere Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami has called him the most important of the Lord's companions. Two persons knew the Lord best: Paramananda Puri and Svarupa Damodar.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 1.10.124-5)

I have already shown that preaching the sankirtan movement was the external cause for the Lord's descent. There is another, primary purpose for the Lord's incarnation. This is the personal work of Krishna, the foremost enjoyer of loving exchanges. This very confidential cause is three-fold, as has been revealed by Svarupa Damodar Goswami. Sri Svarupa Damodar Goswami was extremely close to the Lord and thus was able to know all these matters.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 1.4.103-5)

In his lila as the golden avatar, Mahaprabhu is Krishna himself enveloped by the desire and bodily luster of Srimati Radharani. Sri Svarupa Damodar Goswami was his alter ego. Because of his intimate connection to the Lord, he was able to know all the most confidential reasons for his incarnation as well as the most secret aspects of his lila. He later divulged these understandings to a larger

audience of devotees. In Vraja-lila, he was also Radharani's alter-ego, Lalita Sakhi. In the Gaura-ganoddesha-dipika, Kavi Karnapura identifies Sri Svarupa Damodar Goswami as Radha's other companion, Vishakha Devi.

kalam ashikshayad radham ya vishakha vraje pura
sadya Svarupa-gosvami tat-tad-bhava-vilasavan

That same Vishakha who previously taught Radha the arts in Vraja is today Svarupa Goswami, who rejoices in the moods of Radha and Krishna.

In the last twelve years of the his pastimes in Puri, the Lord remained constantly absorbed in the mood of Radharani. During this time, only Svarupa Damodar and Ramananda Raya were able to experience the depths of his emotion through relishing topics known only to them.

candidasa vidyapati rayera nataka giti
karnamrita shri gita-govinda
svarupa ramananda sane mahaprabhu ratri-dine
gaya, shune parama ananda

Day and night, Mahaprabhu ecstatically relished the songs of Chandi Das, Vidyapati and Ramananda Raya's plays, as well as Krishna-Karnamrita and Gita-Govinda in the company of Svarupa and Ramananda.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.2.77)

Paramananda Puri had parental affection for Mahaprabhu; Ramananda Raya had love for him in pure friendship; Govinda Das's love for him was as a servant. Gadadhara, Jagadananda and Svarupa Damodar worshiped him in the ecstasy of the chief rasa. Mahaprabhu heart was won by these four different loving attitudes.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.2.78)

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur has explained these verses in his Anubhashya as follows: Sri Paramananda Puri, who was Uddhava in Krishna-lila, loved Mahaprabhu with parental affection; Ramananda, who was either Vishakha or Arjuna, had the pure sentiment of a close friend; Govinda and others were devoted to their service to the Lord, and possessed a pure mood of service (shuddha-dasya). Gadadhara, Jagadananda and Svarupa Damodar served the Lord in the primary sentiment, i.e., that of erotic love (madhura-rasa). The

Lord became obliged to these devotees, accepting their worship, their association, their service and their joy.

Svarupa Damodar's Kariaca

Murari Gupta explained all of the Lord's early pastimes in the form of an outline. Svarupa Damodar did the same for the Lord's later pastimes. The devotees describe the Lord's activities by following the order given in these two outlines.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 1.13.15-17)

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur has written his commentary on these verses: Murari Gupta's outline of the Lord's early pastimes are still extant, so devotees were able to expand on the Lord's pastimes after looking at his written text. The Vaishnavas only heard Svarupa Damodar's kariaca through Raghunath Das Goswami.

Chaitanya-lila is like the finest of jewels which were held in Sri Svarupa Damodar Goswami's storehouse and then placed by him around Raghunath Das's neck. I have written down here whatever I heard from him as extensively as I was able, making a gift of it to the devotees.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.2.85)

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur comments on this verse in his Amrita-pravaha-bhashya as follows: Svarupa Damodar described the Lord's latter pastimes in summary Sanskrit verses known as a kariaca. He made Raghunath Das memorize these verses, and later Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami spread these accounts of the Lord's activities throughout the world. As a result, Svarupa Damodar's kariaca was never published in book form. The Chaitanya Charitamrita is itself the essence of Sri Svarupa Damodar Goswami's kariaca.

Svarupa Damodar's Kirtan

Sri Svarupa Damodar used to used to make Mahaprabhu very happy by singing the songs of Vidyapati, Chandi Das and Gita?govinda. He was as expert a musician as the Gandharvas, and in knowledge of the scripure he was just like Brihaspati. No personality was his equal. Sri Svarupa Damodar was also very

dear to Advaita acharya and Nityananda Prabhu, and he was the life and soul of all the devotees, headed by Srivasa Thakur.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.10.115-7)

Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami has described the extent to which Sri Svarupa Damodar Goswami and Ramananda Raya were dear to Mahaprabhu in the 15th chapter of the Antya-lila:

After saying these things, the Lord took Svarupa Damodar and Ramananda Raya by the shoulders and said, “Listen, Svarupa and Rama Raya! Tell me what I should do, where should I go in order to find Krishna. You can tell me the best thing to do.” In this way, Gauranga would tell his tale of woe to Svarupa and Ramananda and they would console him in his grief. Svarupa would sing and Ramananda would recite Sanskrit verses, giving joy to the Lord with Karnamrita, Vidyapati and Gita-Govinda.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.15.24-7)

A similar passage is found in the 20th chapter of the Antya-lila.

Mahaprabhu remained in Nilachala in this way, passing the days and nights absorbed in the anxiety of separation from Krishna. Svarupa and Ramananda were always with him, bringing him ecstasy with their recitation of songs and verses appropriate to his mood.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.20.3-4)

Vrindavan Das Thakur has also named Sri Svarupa Damodar Goswami as one of Mahaprabhu’s principal associates in his Chaitanya Bhagavat. He describes there how the Lord would lose external consciousness when hearing Svarupa’s kirtan:

Whenever Svarupa Damodar would sing aloud, the Lord would lose all awareness of his surroundings and fall to the ground. Of all the sannyasis who were members of the Lord’s entourage, none was the equal of Sri Svarupa Damodar Goswami. The Lord had a great deal of affection for Paramananda Puri, and an equal amount for Svarupa Damodar. Svarupa Damodar was full of the nectar of devotional songs, which would make the Lord dance as soon as he heard them.
(Chaitanya Bhagavat 3.10.40-3)

When Srila Gadadhara Pandit Goswami was living at Tota Gopinath’s temple, he

would give discourses on the Bhagavat while in an ecstatic trance. He primarily spoke on the sections dealing with the lives of Prahlad and Dhruva. Mahaprabhu was overcome by the eight ecstatic symptoms upon hearing Gadadhara's Bhagavat readings and Svarupa Damodar's kirtan.

Gadadhar Pandit was the main expert in the Bhagavat and Svarupa Damodar in kirtan. Svarupa Damodar would sing alone and Mahaprabhu would lose himself in dance. Mahaprabhu would reveal all the symptoms of ecstatic love such as tears, trembling, laughing, fainting, horripilation and roaring. They all manifested on his body as he danced with the devotees. When he heard Svarupa Damodar singing the kirtan aloud, the Lord would lose external consciousness and would fall down on the spot. There was no equal to Svarupa amongst all of the Lord's sannyasi associates. Svarupa was as dear to him as Paramananda Puri. Sri Svarupa Damodar Goswami was the incarnation of the delight of song, which would make Mahaprabhu dance.
(Chaitanya Bhagavat 3.10.36-43)

Early Life and Sannyas

We have the following information about Sri Svarupa Damodar Goswami in terms of his bodily identity. Before taking sannyas, he was known as Purushottam Acharya or Purushottam Bhattacharya. Gaudiya Vaishnava Abhidhana gives the following account of his antecedents: His father's name was Padmagarbhacharya, the son of Jayarama Chakravarti. His residence was in the village of Bhitadiya on the banks of the Brahmaputra River in Bangla Desh. Jayarama Chakravarti made his home in Nabadwip. After his marriage to Jayarama's daughter, Padmagarbha also came to live there. At the birth of Purushottam, Padmagarbha left his wife and child at his father-in-law's house and left for Mithila and Kashi in order to study the scriptures. Thus Purushottam Acharya was raised in his maternal grandparents' home in Nabadwip.

Later, when Mahaprabhu took sannyas, he was unable to remain in Nabadwip due to the feelings of separation from the Lord and he departed for Benares where he also took the renounced order of life. This is described as follows in the Prema-vilasa:

Purushottam became a resident of Nabadwip, staying with his mother's parents. Filled with all virtues, he became Mahaprabhu's dear devotee. When the Lord

took sannyas, he went mad with separation and left for Benares where he also took sannyas. Svarupa Damodar was given to him as his sannyas name. He was an intimate devotee of the Lord, an ocean of rasa.

Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami has also pointed out some of the special characteristics of Sri Svarupa Damodar Goswami’s sannyas:

On another day, Svarupa Damodar arrived; he was a very intimate friend of the Lord and an ocean of transcendental mellows. Before taking sannyas, he had resided at Nabadwip in Mahaprabhu’s association and was known as Purushottam Acharya. When he saw Mahaprabhu accept the renounced order, he became like a madman and immediately went to Varanasi to take sannyas. His sannyas guru, Caitanyananda Bharati, ordered him to study the Vedanta?sutra and to teach it to others. Svarupa Damodar was a great renunciate as well as a great learned scholar. With heart and soul he took shelter of Krishna’s pastimes.

Due to his enthusiasm to worship Sri Krishna without any disturbance, he accepted the sannyas order almost in madness. When taking sannyas, Purushottam Acharya followed the regulative principles by giving up his tuft of hair and sacred thread, but he did not accept the saffron?colored dress. Nor did he take a sannyasi title but rather kept the brahmachari name Svarupa.

Svarupa Damodar then took permission from his sannyas?guru and went to Nilachala where day and night he enjoyed the ecstacies of love for Krishna. Though he had attained the peak of learning, he spoke to no one but remained incognito and in seclusion.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.10.102-114)

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur has made the following comments on this section of the Chaitanya Charitamrita: In the Dashanami sect founded by Sankaracharya, the lines which take the sannyas names of Tirtha and Ashrama follow the custom of giving the title Brahmachari to anyone who desires to be initiated in the renounced order. The aspirant is then required to vow to remain celibate for the rest of his life. He is also given a brahmachari title, which in Purushottam Acharya’s case was Svarupa Da modara. Upon taking the saffron cloth known as yoga-patta, any brahmachari who has the title Svarupa takes the sannyas name of Tirtha.
(Anubhashya, 2.10.102)

In the Dashanami sect, certain regulative principles must be followed before taking sannyas: one must perform eight kinds of shraddha, offering oblations to one's forefathers, the Viraja sacrifice. Then one cuts off the tuft of hair called a shikha and gives up the sacred thread. Svarupa Damodar accepted these preliminary processes in the acceptance of sannyas, but not accept the gurvahvana, or "I"call of the guru"/I", saffron cloth, a sannyas title or a danda, and for this reason he retained his brahmachari name.

It may be pointed out here that for those who follow the formalities of tridandi sannyas, the keeping of the shikha, the sacred thread and saffron cloth are approved by the Skanda Purana, which states:

shikhi yajïopaviti syat tridandi sa-kamandaluh
sa pavitrash ca kashayi gayatrim ca japet sada

Wearing the shikha, sacred thread and saffron cloth and carrying the kamandalu water pot, a tridandi sannyasi should constantly chant the gayatri mantra while remaining pure in his habits. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur has also commented in his Amrita-pravaha-bhashya: Purushottam Acharya took Mahaprabhu's example and took sannyas simply by renouncing his shikha and sutra. His sannyas name was Svarupa Damodar. He did not accept the formality of the yoga-patta because he wished to avoid any danger of becoming falsely proud of his status which would come with taking sannyas. He only wished to worship Krishna without any worries. (to 2.10.108)

In the Anubhashya commentary to Adi-lila (4.105) of Chaitanya Charitamrita, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur writes, Purushottam Bhattacharya was a resident of Nabadwip. Even prior to Mahaprabhu's taking sannyas, he desired to renounce the world. He left home and went to Benares, where he accepted the position of brahmacarya in a group of Dashanami sannyasis. When he became a brahmachari, he was given the name Damodar Svarupa. He did not bother completing the sannyas rituals and came to Nilachala, Jagannath Puri, where spent the rest of his life at the Lord's lotus feet. He became Mahaprabhu's constant companion, enhancing the Lord's pleasure by singing the songs requested by the Lord. Svarupa Damodar could understand Mahaprabhu's secret mission and it was by his grace alone that all the Lord's devotees could know his deepest purpose.

Svarupa Arrives in Puri

Mahaprabhu took sannyas on the full moon day of the month of Magh and left for Nilachala in the following month of Phalguna. After delivering Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, he left for his pilgrimage to South India in the month of Vaishakh. Nityananda Prabhu gave him a Brahmin named Kala Krishna Das as his servant to accompany him on this trip. When Mahaprabhu returned from this journey, after having brought good fortune to the inhabitants of the South by bringing them Krishna-prema, Nityananda sent Krishna Das back to Nabadwip to inform the devotees that the Lord had arrived in Puri. The news brought great joy to Sachi Mata, Advaita Acharya, Srivasa Pandit and the other devotees. They immediately started making preparations to visit the Lord in Puri. Paramananda Puri had been staying at Sachi Mata's house and he decided to leave ahead of the others with a Brahmin named Kamala Kanta. They were thus the first to come from Bengal to meet the Lord. Not long afterward, Purushottam Acharya, who had already been to Benares and taken sannyas from Caitanyananda Bharati and received the name Svarupa Damodar, arrived and joyously entered the Lord's entourage. When he first saw the Lord, Sri Svarupa Damodar Goswami recited the following prayer:

heloddhulita-khedaya vishadaya pronmilad-amodaya
shamyac-chastra-vivadaya rasa-daya cittarpitonmadaya
shashvad-bhakti-vinodaya sa-madaya madhurya-maryadaya
shri-caitanya daya-nidhe tava daya bhuyad amandodaya

O ocean of mercy, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu!
May your auspicious mercy arise like the dawn
driving away all kinds of material lamentation,
making everything pure and awakening transcendental bliss,
ending all quarrels and disagreements among different scriptures,
giving the taste of spiritual life
and maddening the minds of those surrendered to you,
constantly giving the intoxicating joy of devotional service,
and revealing the extent of the conjugal mood's sweetness.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.10.119, Chaitanya-candrodaya nataka 10.8)

Sri Svarupa Damodar Goswami first received the mercy of the Lord in the form of a heartfelt embrace. Then he paid his obeisances to Nityananda Prabhu and Paramananda Puri and then was introduced to Jagadananda and the other devotees. He first met Raya Ramananda when the latter came to Puri with King

Prataparudra and met Mahaprabhu there for the first time with the intention of persuading the Lord to meet with the king.

Friendship with Pundarika Vidyanidhi

In Puri, Sri Svarupa Damodar Goswami parcipated in the water sports in Narendra Sarovara at the time of the Candana yatra and in the Indradyumna Sarovara after the cleaning of the Gundicha temple. He and Pundarika Vidyanidhi enjoyed splashing each other.

The two friends, Vidyanidhi and Svarupa Damodar, joyously splashed each other and laughed.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.8.124)

Jagannath has an an annual festival in Puri named Oriana Shashthi. On this occasion, Jagannath's pujaris dress the deity in cloth which still has the tapioca-based starch (mari) in it. Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi did not like this behavior of the pujaris, as he considered such cloth to be unclean. He went to Svarupa Damodar and asked him for his opinion on the matter. Svarupa Damodar said to him, The Lord is completely independent. He is not dependent on the rules regulating deity worship found in the smritis.

Vidyanidhi immediately answered him, "I accept that Jagannath is completely independent. That does not mean that the pujaris are completely independent of the rules and regulations of scripture. They are not brahma, that they dress the Lord in unwashed cloth. Didn't you know that if you even touch cloth that has mari in it, you are supposed to wash your hands?"

That night Jagannath and Balaram appeared to Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi in a dream and slapped him on his cheeks for having criticized their sevayatas. By so doing, Jagannath showed that one is not to criticize his servants for apparent lapses in behavior. The smartas are especially subject to criticizing Vaishnava behavior for failing to adhere to the obscure standards of the smriti. Sri Pundarika Vidyanidhi, though his cheeks were swollen from the slaps, was overjoyed to have been touched by their Lordships. Svarupa Damodar also congratulated Vidyanidhi for his good fortune:

As he looked Pundarika Vidyanidhi over, Svarupa Damodar felt an affection

arising in him. Indeed he started to float in an ocean of ecstasy. A friend always feels joy at the good fortune of a friend. The two of them began to laugh spiritedly and Svarupa Damodar said, “Listen, brother. I have never seen or heard of a punishment like this one. The Lord came personally to chastise you in a dream. I never heard of such a thing, but now I see that it has happened to you!” The two friends floated in a feeling of satisfaction. They spent day and night talking of nothing but Krishna conscious topics.
(Chaitanya Bhagavat 3.10.173-177)

Gundicha and Rathayatra Pastimes

Sri Svarupa Damodar Goswami was one of the chief participants in the cleaning of the Gundicha temple on the eve of the Rathayatra. “Other than Nityananda, Advaita, Svarupa, Brahmananda Bharati and Paramananda Puri, everyone carried buckets of water.”
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.12.109)

During the washing of the Gundicha temple, a simple but intelligent Brahmin who was not aware of the nature of the Vaishnavas’ devotional etiquette, took some water, suddenly poured it over the Lord’s feet and drank it. In view of Mahaprabhu’s identity as the incarnation of Krishna, it was certainly no offense to drink the water which had washed Mahaprabhu’s feet even though it was done inside the temple of the Lord, but here Mahaprabhu acted as an exemplar for the world and showed dissatisfaction at the Brahmin’s behavior in order that no other person imitate him and become an offender to the feet of the Supreme Lord. He let his anger be known to Svarupa Damodar who caught the Bengali Brahmin and pushed him out of the temple. The next instant, however, he returned to the Lord’s side and asked him to forgive the Brahmin. Though a Vaishnava may externally appear to be hard-hearted, internally he or she is always filled with compassion and thinks of the welfare of every living being.

Every year during Balaram, Jagannath and Subhadra’s ratha festival, the Lord would make four kirtan groups with his devotees. Svarupa Damodar would sing in the first of these, with Advaita participating as the principal dancer. With other kirtan groups from Shantipur, Sri Khanda and Kulina Grama, there were seven sampradayas altogether. In each group, there were two drummers, meaning that there were 14 altogether. When the kirtan started in each of the seven groups, Mahaprabhu demonstrated his divine powers by appearing simultaneously in the

midst of each one of them. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur writes, “Just as the Lord expands into numerous forms during the rasa dance and to marry the queens in Dvaraka, Lord Chaitanya expanded in order to be present in the midst of each sampradayas’ kirtan. The members of each group were convinced that the Lord was in his group alone and in none of the others.”

When Mahaprabhu wished to dance madly, he would have the seven groups come together and would dance in their midst, appointing nine singers and making Svarupa Damodar the principal singer. As the devotees became progressively intoxicated by the kirtan, Mahaprabhu danced frenziedly for many moments. After this, Mahaprabhu’s mood changed. Svarupa Damodar was able to understand the Lord’s intention and began to sing,

sei to parananatha painu
jaha lagi madana-dahane jhuri genu

”I have finally found my life’s lord, for whom I had so long burned in the flames of desire.”

Bhaktivinoda Thakur writes, “As the Lord’s frenzied dancing came to an end, he became absorbed in the mood of Radharani at Kurukshetra. This song about meeting the beloved after a long separation came naturally to Svarupa Damodar’s lips.” As he felt the mood of union strengthening, the Lord began to loudly recite the following verse:

yah kaumaraharah sa eva hi varas ta eva caitra-kshapas
te conmilita-malati-surabhayah praudhah kadambanilah
sa caivasmi tathapi tatra surata-vyapara-lila-vidhau
reva-rodhasi vetasi-taru-tale cetah samutkanthate
(Kavya-prakasha 1)

My husband (vara) is the same who took my maidenhead
and these the moondrenched nights we knew;
the very breeze is blowing from the Vindhya hills,
heavy with the scent of newly blossomed jasmine.
I too am still the same;
and yet with all my heart I yearn for the reedbeds by the stream
which knew our happy, graceful,
unending bouts of love.

This verse was written about a mundane lover and his mistress, but Mahaprabhu recited it with great respectful feeling. No one could understand what was his hidden intention other than Svarupa Damodar.

The Lord repeated this verse again and again. No one but Svarupa Damodar could understand his intention.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.13.122)

When Rupa Goswami heard the Lord recite this verse, he himself composed a verse which revealed the deeper meaning which the Lord had envisioned. He wrote it down on a palm leaf and hid it in the roof of his cottage. The Lord somehow or other found this palm leaf and when he read it was overcome by prema.

When Mahaprabhu went to the residence of Srila Rupa Goswami, He accidentally saw the palm leaf on the roof, and thus He read the verse composed by him. After reading the verse, he went into a ecstatic mood. While he was in that state, Srila Rupa Goswami came and immediately fell down on the floor like a stick.

The Lord got up and gave him a slap. Then, he embraced him and began to speak as follows: “No one knows the purport of my verse. How could you understand my intention?” Saying this, Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu bestowed various blessings upon Rupa Goswami, and taking the verse, he later showed it to Svarupa Goswami. With great wonder, the Lord asked him how Rupa Goswami could have understood the intentions of his mind. Srila Svarupa Damodar Goswami replied, “If Rupa Goswami can understand your mind, I believe it must be the result of your special benediction.”
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.13.66-72)

Rupa Goswami’s verse was the following:

priyah so’yam krishnah sahacari kurukshetra-militas
tathaham sa radha tad idam ubhayoh sangama-sukham
tathapy antah-khelan-madhura-murali-païcama-jushe
mano me kalindi-pulina-vipinaya sprihayati
(Padyavali, 383)

O companion! This is my beloved Krishna
meeting me here in Kurukshetra;
and I am the same Radha,
and both of us are feeling the joy of union.
Even so, my mind wishes for the forest
by the banks of the Yamuna
where the fifth note of his flute
plays sweetly within my heart.

Mahaprabhu's vision was that the Jagannath temple was Kurukshetra and the Gundicha temple Vrindavan. In the mood of a gopi, he began to pull on Jagannath's chariot, pulling him back to Vrindavan. Sri Svarupa Damodar Goswami was able to understand all of these various moods that Mahaprabhu experienced during the Rathayatra.

The Lord had relished these topics in his room with Svarupa Damodar for days and nights. When he was overcome with this mood while dancing before the Lord's chariot, he would repeat this verse while gazing upon Jagannath's face. No one can describe Sri Svarupa Damodar Goswami's good fortune, for he was completely absorbed, body, mind and soul, in the Lord. His senses are the Lord's senses, and he would sing so that the Lord could more deeply relish the sentiments of love.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.13.161-4)

Jagannath Deva lives in Dvaraka and desires to go once a year to Vrindavan. This is symbolized by the Rathayatra festival when he travels from the Jagannath temple (Dvaraka) to Gundicha (Vrind_vana). When he goes to Vrindavan, Jagannath does not take Lakshmi with him, because Lakshmi is not qualified to participate in the Vrindavan lila. Only the gopis have such qualifications, and Radha is the best of the gopis.

Svarupa said, "Listen, my Lord, to the reason for this. Lakshmi does not have the right to participate in the games of Vrindavan. Krishna's companions in the Vrindavan lila are the gopis, and there are none but they who can enchant his mind."
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.14.122-3)

Amongst the gopis, Radha is the best. She is a treasure chest of jewels of love in the bright and spotless sentiment of conjugal love.

(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.14.160)

Jagannath mounted his chariot after telling Lakshmi that he would be back on the very next day. When Lakshmi saw that the Lord was late in returning, she became angry and gathering up her forces, sallied forth to attack her beloved. Her servants captured the servants of Lord Jagannath and brought them to her. Such lovers' quarrels are not heard of anywhere in the world. Nevertheless, the mana (loving jealousy) of the gopis is superior to that of Lakshmi, and of all the gopis, that of Radha is the purest. When Mahaprabhu wished to hear about the gopis' mana from Svarupa Damodar, Svarupa gave him great satisfaction by answering extensively. He was always able to please the Lord because he knew his wishes so intimately.

Bhagavan Acharya and His Brother

Sri Svarupa Damodar Goswami had a close friendship with the name Bhagavan Acharya of Halisahar.

Bhagavan Acharya was a great devotee, a scholar and and a man of refined habits. He came to Purushottam to be with the Lord. He was an incarnation of a cowherd who served Krishna in the mood of friendship. His dealings with Svarupa Damodar were also those of a close friend. He was completely surrendered to the Lord's lotus feet, and he occasionally invited him to eat at his residence.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.2.84-6)

Bhagavan Acharya was a generous and unpretentious Vaishnava. Even so, his father Shatananda Khan was a very materialistic person and his younger brother Gopal Bhattacharya was a mayavadi. When Gopal Bhattacharya came to Puri, the simple, straightforward Bhagavan Acharya asked Svarupa Damodar to listen to his brother speak on Shankara's Vedanta-bhashya: "Gopal, my younger brother, has come here after finishing his study of Vedanta philosophy. Come everyone and hear the commentary upon Vedanta from him."

Svarupa Damodar Goswami, however, somewhat angry out of love for Bhagavan Acharya, answered as follows: "You have lost your intelligence in the association of Gopal, and now you are eager to hear the Mayavada philosophy. When a Vaishnava listens to the Shariraka-bhashya, the Mayavada commentary

upon Vedanta-sutra, he gives up the attitude that the Lord is the master and the living entity is his servant. Instead, he considers himself to be the Supreme Lord. The Mayavada philosophy is so dangerous that even a highly elevated devotee who has accepted Krishna as his life and soul changes his attitude when he reads the Mayavada philosophy."

Bhagavan Acharya continued, "We are all fixed at the lotus feet of Krishna with our hearts and souls. Therefore the Shariraka-bhashya cannot change our minds."

Svarupa Damodar replied, "Nevertheless, when we hear the Mayavada philosophy, we hear that Brahman is the only spiritual reality and that the universe of maya is false, but we gain no spiritual understanding. When a devotee hears the Mayavadi say that the living entity is only imaginary and that the Supreme Lord is a manifestation of ignorance, it breaks his heart and life."
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.2.92-99)

Svarupa Watches for Rasabhasa

Svarupa Damodar was the personification of ecstatic love, fully cognizant of the transcendental mellows in relationship with Krishna. He was like a second manifestation of Mahaprabhu. If someone wrote a book or composed verses and songs and wanted to recite them before Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Svarupa Damodar would have to first examine them before the Lord would agree to listen. Mahaprabhu was never pleased to hear books or verses opposed to siddhanta, nor did he like hearing rasabhasa, an improper mixture of devotional sentiments. It was the practice of Svarupa Damodar Goswami to examine all works of literature to find out whether their conclusions were correct. Only then would he allow them to be heard by the Lord.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.10.110-114)

One day a poet came from eastern Bengal who wrote according to his own whim. He had written a play and had read it to Bhagavan Acharya who then asked Svarupa Damodar to give an opinion on it. If Svarupa Damodar approved then it could be presented to Mahaprabhu for his enjoyment. Many of the Vaishnavas had praised the literary qualities of the play, and Svarupa Damodar finally agreed to read it after repeated requests from his friend. But after hearing only the invocation verse, Svarupa Damodar pointed out numerous faults in it,

demonstrating how it contradicted Vaishnava dogma. When he saw the poet's distress at being criticized, Svarupa Damodar became compassionate and said,

jaho bhagavata pario vaishnavera sthane
ekanta ashraya karo caitanya-carane
caitanyera bhakta-ganera nitya karo sanga
tabe to janiba siddhanta-samudra-taranga
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.5.131-2)

Go and study the Bhagavat from a Vaishnava. Take exclusive shelter of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's lotus feet. Associate constantly with the devotees of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Only then will you be able to understand all the waves of the ocean of Vaishnava philosophy.

It was in Bhagavan Acharya's house that Chota Hari Das came to beg for fine rice from Madhavi Devi and engaged in conversation with her. As a result of his conversing with a woman, Mahaprabhu ostracized Chota Hari Das. The Lord was as hard as a thunderbolt towards Hari Das, and Sri Svarupa Damodar Goswami made an attempt to intercede, persuading Hari Das to eat after he had undertaken a fast. However, Mahaprabhu remained untouched by Svarupa Damodar's efforts and a year later, Hari Das went to Prayag and gave up his life.

Svarupa and the Goswamis

When Sanatan Goswami came alone to Puri from Mathura, he caught scabies in the Jharikhanda jungle. In Puri, he stayed in Hari Das Thakur's cottage where Mahaprabhu came to seem him daily, embracing him despite the pus-filled sores which covered his body. Ashamed at his condition, Sanatan decided to commit suicide, but was prevented from doing so by the all-knowing Lord. During his stay in Puri, Sanatan was introduced to all the devotees of the Lord including Svarupa Damodar.

Govardhana Majumdar's son, Raghunath Das tricked his guru and family priest Yadunandana Acharya into giving him permission to leave his home. He walked to Puri in only twelve days where he met Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu was extremely merciful to Raghunath and turned him over to Sri Svarupa Damodar Goswami for tutelage. From that day on he was known as Svarupa's Raghu.

When he saw Raghunath's thin and dirty body, the Lord felt sympathy for him. He turned to Svarupa Damodar and said, "I am turning this Raghunath over to you. I want you to take care of him as though he were your own son and personal servant. I have three Raghunaths in my entourage. From now on, we will call this one Svarupa's Raghu." After he had said these words, the Lord took Raghunath's hand and placed it in that of Svarupa Damodar.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.3.201-4)

Raghunath Das never spoke directly to Mahaprabhu. If he wished to make a submission to the Lord, he made it through either Svarupa Damodar or Govinda. He told Svarupa Damodar repeatedly that he wished to hear Mahaprabhu's personal instructions on how to practice the spiritual life. After Svarupa passed this request on to the Lord, Mahaprabhu smiled and told Raghunath Das, "I have appointed Svarupa Damodar to be your instructor. You may learn from him about the spiritual practices and their goal. I myself do not know as much as he. Nevertheless, if you have faith in my orders, you you may fix your direction from the following words: Do not listen to gossip. Don't engage in gossip. You should not eat very palatable food, nor should you dress very nicely. Always chant the holy name of Lord Krishna without any expectation of honor, and offering all respect to others. Mentally render service to Radha and Krishna in Vrindavan. I have briefly given you my instructions, you will learn about them in detail from Svarupa Damodar.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.6.233-8)

On the occasion of Hari Das Thakur's disappearance, the Lord initiated the performance of sankirtan. The devotees surrounded Hari Das Thakur's body and Svarupa Damodar sang the Holy Names with the devotees while Vakresvara Pandit danced. Svarupa Damodar then went to the Jagannath temple to seek prasad for the feast which followed the burial of Hari Das and he joined Jagadananda Pandit and others to serve the devotees.

Raghunath Bhatta, the son of Tapana Mishra, left his home in Benares to come to Puri via Bengal. When he met Mahaprabhu, the Lord embraced him and introduced him to Svarupa Damodar and the other devotees.

Mahaprabhu's Intense Austerities

At a certain time, Mahaprabhu went through a period of intense austerity.

Constantly crying the names of Krishna, he lost a great deal of weight due to his feelings of separation. He slept on a bed of plantain bark, taking no notice of the pain which resulted when his bones rubbed against the bark. The devotees, however, were greatly distressed to see his suffering. Jagadananda Pandit in particular was affected and he decided to do something about it. He obtained some fine cloth and dyed it saffron, and then filled it with cotton from the silk cotton tree. In this way he made both a mattress and a pillow for the Lord's comfort. Jagadananda then asked Govinda Das to give the mattress and pillow to the Lord and Svarupa Damodar to convince him to use them. When it was time for the Lord to go to bed, he saw the nice bed and asked angrily, "Who has made this bed?" When he heard from Govinda that Jagadananda Pandit had given it, he hesitated because Jagadananda was Satyabhama's incarnation and given to fits of jealous anger. Even so, he had Govinda remove Jagadananda's bedding and went to sleep on the plantain bark bed. When Svarupa Damodar reminded the Lord that Jagadananda would be distressed if he did not use his bedding, he answered,"A mattress and pillow? Why don't you just go and get me a bed? A sannyasi is supposed to sleep on the ground. Jagadananda wants me to become a sense enjoyer. This is shameful."

Jagadananda was indeed upset when he heard from Svarupa Damodar that Mahaprabhu had refused the bedding. Svarupa Damodar cleverly made a mattress and pillow out of dried banana leaves torn into small pieces and stuffed into pieces of the Lord's used clothes. Despite his reluctance, the Lord accepted this new bedding. This satisfied all the devotees with the exception of Jagadananda, who asked the Lord permission to leave for Vrindavan. Mahaprabhu said, "Jagadananda is angry with me, that is why he wants to go to Vrindavan." This story gives a brilliant example of Svarupa Damodar's expertise in serving the Lord.

Mahaprabhu's Ecstasies

As Mahaprabhu's feelings of separation intensified to the point of seeming insanity, he was kept at night in the Gambhira, behind three locked doors. One day, Svarupa and Govinda noticed that even though the doors were still bolted, Mahaprabhu was missing. In great anxiety, the two of them started to look for the Lord everywhere. Finally they found him near the Lion's Gate of the Jagannath temple, lying unconscious on the ground with all his joints loosened, his entire form lengthened. Svarupa Damodar started to sing the names of

Krishna into the Lord’s ear until suddenly he jumped up, his body returning to its normal condition, and shouted, “Haribol!” When the Lord returned to normal consciousness, Svarupa Damodar led him back to the Gambhira.

One day, the Lord saw the sand dunes and took them to be Govardhana. He ran towards them, while Svarupa Damodar and Jagadananda ran behind him. His body was overwhelmed by the ecstatic transformations and he fell to the ground in a faint. When the devotee’s saw the Lord in this state, they began to cry. He partially regained consciousness when the devotees started to chant the Holy Name aloud. In this state, he started to prattle, “I was at Govardhana. I saw Krishna herding the cows and playing the flute. When they heard the flute, the gopis came running toward him. Srimati Radharani was there and Krishna took here into a grotto. Then suddenly you all started to call me back here. Why did you do that? Just to bring me pain?” The Lord began to cry and the devotees, affected by his great distress at losing his vision, and they joined him in shedding tears.

A few days later, Mahaprabhu was in the Gambhira in the divyonmada state, the madness of separation. Svarupa Damodar and Ramananda Raya stayed up until the middle of the night with the Lord enjoying discussions of Krishna’s pastimes. Finally, after a great deal of effort, they managed to persuade the Lord to lie down and take some rest, after which they each returned to their own quarters. Govinda also slept in the Gambhira. As he chanted the names of Krishna, Mahaprabhu suddenly heard the sound of Krishna’s flute and in the ecstasy which overcame him, he ran out of the Gambhira, even though there were three doors bolted from the outside. This time he fell down amongst a herd of Tailangi cows to the south of the Lion’s Gate. When Govinda heard no answer from the Lord, despite calling for him, he informed Svarupa Damodar of the situation.

Svarupa Damodar organized a search party of devotees with torches until finally they found him lying unconscious in the midst of the cows. This time, his limbs were retracted into his body giving it the appearance of a tortoise; his mouth was covered with foam, there were eruptions on his body and his eyes were filled with tears. He looked like a pumpkin, without any limbs. Externally suffering as though poisoned, internally he was experiencing divine ecstasies. The cows had surrounded the Lord and were sniffing his body, and even when the devotees shooed them away, they would not come back, attracted by the Lord. After many attempts to arouse the Lord, when the devotees failed to bring him back to

consciousness, they picked him up and carried him to the Gambhira. There they started singing the Holy Names aloud in kirtan. This continued for some time until finally the Lord returned to an external state of consciousness and his body also took on its normal appearance.

Still in a trance-like state, Mahaprabhu asked Svarupa Damodar, “Where have you brought me? I had heard the sound of Krishna’s flute and I went to Vrindavan. I saw Krishna with the cattle, playing his flute. Radha and the gopis understood his signal and came to the bower cottage trysting place. I followed them there and felt ecstasy when hearing the sound of their tinkling ornaments and their voices and laughter. You forced me to come back here and I can no longer hear their humorous conversations, nor the sound of their ornaments and musical instruments.”

Sri Svarupa Damodar Goswami recognized the Lord’s state and sang a verse from the Bhagavat in his sweet voice:

ka stry-anga te kala-padayata-venu-gita-
sammohitarya-caritan na calet trilokyam
trailokya-saubhagam idam ca nirikshya rupam
yad go-dvija-druma-mrigah pulakany abibhrat

O dear one!
What woman within these three worlds
would not be captivated by the sweet rhythms
of your wonderful flute-song?
What woman would not abandon
her vows of chastity as a result?
For upon beholding your beauty,
the most sublime in this universe
even cows, birds, trees and animals
horripilate in jubilation.
(BhP 10.29.40)

As soon as the Lord heard this verse, he once again merged into the mood of the gopis and began to sing all the statements which the gopis made in separation from Krishna, known as citra-jalpa.

The Lord Jumps into the Sea

Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami has described another extraordinary event of this type. Once, during a full-moon evening in autumn, the Lord was inspired to remember Krishna's rasa-lila. Accompanied by his devotees, he wandered through the Ai Tota garden next to the Gundicha temple, relishing songs about the rasa dance. As they approached the seashore, Mahaprabhu took the sea to be the Yamuna River and jumped into it. His body floated south toward Konarka until a fisherman caught him in his nets, thinking him to be a large fish. When he dragged the Lord on board his boat, he saw that all his limbs were distended, transformed into a giant human form. Upon touching him, the fisherman was immediately infused with prema and started crying and calling the name of Krishna.

Meanwhile, Svarupa Damodar and the other devotees were desperately seeking the Lord. Finally they saw the fisherman standing on the shore with the Lord on his shoulders. When Svarupa saw the fisherman in a state of ecstatic transformation, he came and explained who Mahaprabhu was, but still had to slap him several times before he calmed down. Then the devotees began to sing the Holy Names aloud until the Lord jumped up with a roar. Once again, while in a state of half-absorption in trance, Mahaprabhu recounted everything that he had experienced. Mahaprabhu had been in the world of Krishna's rasa-lila and water sports. When they heard all his ecstatic utterances, the devotees trembled in awareness of the Lord's divine loving madness. Then they led him back to the Gambhira.

The Lord's Final Days

When Advaita Acharya sent the riddle message back from Bengal with Jagadananda Pandit, indicating that the Lord's pastimes would soon come to an end, Svarupa Damodar became distracted, while the Lord's divine madness became more and more intense. In his final instructions to Svarupa Damodar and Ramananda Raya, the Lord made it very clear that Harinama sankirtan is the supreme method for attaining love for Krishna.

The Lord, in a wave of jubilation say, "Listen Svarupa Damodar and Ramananda Raya! In the age of Kali, Harinama sankirtan is the supreme means of deliverance. In the age of Kali, Krishna is to be worshiped by the congregational chanting of his Holy Names. This is the way that an intelligent person attains the

lotus feet of Krishna. Through the chanting of the Holy Name, all of one’s sinful reactions are extinguished and all auspiciousness arises until finally one experiences the joys of love for Krishna.”
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.20.8-11)

After saying this, the Lord recited his own eight verses known as the Shikshashtaka. As he relished them, he felt more and more humble in feelings of separation from Krishna. Taking on the mood of Srimati Radharani, he became totally absorbed in love for Krishna.

Sri Svarupa Damodar Goswami and Ramananda Raya remained constantly by the Lord’s side throughout his ecstasies in divyonmada, calming him and enriching his feelings of love. Sri Svarupa Damodar Goswami left the world on the day of Lord Jagannath’s Rathayatra, not long after the Lord’s disappearance.

Sri Vakresvara Pandit

vyuhas turyo'niruddho yah sa vakresvara-paditah /
kadavesaja-natyena prabhoh sukham ajijanat //
sahasra-gayakan mahyam dehi tvam karuda-maya /
iti caitanya-pade sa uvaca madhuram vacah /
sva-prakasa-vibhedena sasirekha tam avisat //

Vakresvara Pandit is the fourth member of the catur-vyuha, Aniruddha.He brought happiness to the lord by dancing in the mood of Krishna. He would sweetly say to Mahaprabhu, "O merciful lord! Give me a thousand singers so that I can dance." Radha's dear sakhi Sasirekha also entered into him. (Gaura-gadoddesa-dipika 71)

Sri Vakresvara Pandit revealed such great potency that he danced non-stop for three days. Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami wrote the following about Vakresvara

Pandit:

Vakresvara Pandit is the Lord's dear servant, who danced without rest for seventy-two hours. Mahaprabhu himself sang as he danced when Vakresvara fell down at his feet and said, "O moon-faced lord! Give me ten thousand Gandharvas. I will be happy if I can dance while they sing. The Lord answered, "You are like a wing. If I had another like you, I would be able to fly in the sky!" (Chaitanya Charitamrita 1.10.17-20)

Vakresvara and Devananda Pandit

He was also present at the houses of Srivasa and Chandrasekhara, where he would also dance during kirtan. Vakresvara was so dear to Mahaprabhu that when Devananda Pandit was able to receive Mahaprabhu's mercy by serving him. In this way he was able to become free of the offenses he had made to Srivasa Pandit. Mahaprabhu explained how to atone for offenses to the Vaishnavas in answer to a Brahmin's question.

Listen, Brahmin, if someone eats poison then he must take ambrosia through the very same mouth. Then the poison will be digested and the body will become immortal by the power of the divine ambrosia. Now let me answer your question. Whatever blasphemies you have unknowingly made are exactly like poison which you have eaten. Now you must use the same mouth to constantly glorify Krishna's name and qualities, which are like ambrosia. You have used this mouth to insult the devotees, now use it to glorify them. Glorify the devotees as the best of humanity, glorify them in songs and poetry. I will destroy all the poison of blasphemy through the ambrosia of the ecstasies of Krishna's glories. You have all unknowingly committed offenses; this is the truth. If you should stop all kinds of offensive activity and simply engage in praising Krishna and his devotees, then you will be free from all the sins you have committed, however numerous they may be. You will not be able to achieve the same results by millions of atonements. (Chaitanya Bhagavat 3.3.449-458)

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur comments: "An offensive person will only attain auspiciousness if he uses the mouth through which he made his blasphemous comments to acknowledge his offense and then to glorify Krishna and his devotees. If you take poison it will disrupt the body's functioning, but you can remedy the situation by taking a medicine that destroys

its effects. Similarly, the way to become free from the poisonous effects of Vaishnava-ninda is to first of all stop; then, rather than performing thousands of other ineffective atonement rituals, one should glorify the Vaishnava.

"Through serving the devotee, Kuliya's Devananda Pandit became a believer in Mahaprabhu's lotus feet. This good fortune visited him when Vakresvara came to stay in his house. Devananda was a follower of the smarta path, but was nevertheless a great scholar and very renounced. He read no scripture other than the Bhagavatam. He was devoted to the Supreme Lord and was free from the domination of his senses. Nevertheless, he was not a believer in Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. By Vakresvara's mercy, this foolish misunderstanding was dispelled and he developed faith in the lord."(Gauiya-bhaya to Chaitanya Bhagavat 3.3.453, 481)

Vakresvara Pandit was very dear to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Anyone who remembers him will purify the entire creation. He is the embodiment of Krishna prema and the gods and the demons would all become enchanted by his dancing. (Chaitanya Bhagavat 3.3.469-70)

Mahaprabhu himself described Vakresvara's glories to Devananda Pandit:

The Lord said, "You have served Vakresvara, therefore I have come to know you. Vakresvara Pandit is the Lord's complete energy and whoever pays homage to him attains Krishna. Krishna has made his home in Vakresvara's heart. Krishna dances in order to make Vakresvara dance. If any place becomes associated with Vakresvara, it immediately becomes the equivalent of Vaikuntha and equal to all the holy places. (Chaitanya Bhagavat 3.3.493-6)

When Mahaprabhu had absolved Devananda of his offenses, then he instructed him with great affection. Those vain egoists who are proud of their scholarship cannot understand the meaning of the Bhagavatam; that is the prerogative of those who are surrendered, the saradagata. The only object of the Bhagavatam is to elucidate pure devotion; it is not different from the pure devotee. One is the book Bhagavatam, the other is the person Bhagavatam. One who speaks from the Bhagavatam with this knowledge will attain the supreme auspiciousness.

One who thinks, "I understand the Bhagavatam" does not really know the Bhagavatam's central meaning. On the other hand, an ignorant person who takes shelter of the Bhagavatam will directly perceive its meaning. The Bhagavatam is

pure love, it is the incarnation of Krishna himself. It recounts Krishna's most intimate activities. After recounting the Vedas and the Puranas, Vedavyasa felt unsatisfied, but as soon as the Bhagavatam manifested on his tongue, his mind was immediately satisfied. (Chaitanya Bhagavat 3.3.514-8)

Gopal Guru Goswami When Vakresvara came to live at Puri, he would accompany Mahaprabhu, Advaita Acharya and other devotees to Tota Gopinath to hear Gadadhara Pandit give discourses on the Bhagavatam. One should hear the book Bhagavatam from the devotee Bhagavatam.

Gopal Guru Goswami was Vakresvara Pandit's disciple. Gopal Guru's previous name was Makaradhvaja Pandit; his father's name was Murari Pandit. It is said that Gopal Guru also displayed extraordinary powers. In his childhood, Gopal Guru personally served Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. When Abhirama Thakur came to pay him obeisances, Mahaprabhu took him on his lap to protect him. Mahaprabhu gave Gopal the name Guru because he instructed people to chant Krishna's names in all circumstances, whether pure or impure.

Before leaving his body, Gopal Guru turned over the service of his Krishnakanta deity to his disciple, Dhyanachandra Goswami. After his death, when Gopal Guru's body was taken to the Svarga-dvara to be cremated, some representatives of the king came and closed the Radhakanta Math. Dhyanachandra was so distressed that he began to cry aloud. Gopal Guru arose from the funeral pyre, returned to Radhakanta's temple and resolved the problem before going back to the crematorium. Even after that, however, Gopal Guru appeared in Vrindavan, where devotees were amazed to witness him engaged in his devotions. A murti of Gopal Guru is still worshiped at Radhakanta Math. Most of Vakresvara Pandit's disciples' descendants in Orissa consider themselves to be Gaudiya Vaishnavas.

During Rathayatra at Puri, Vakresvara was the chief dancer in the fourth kirtan sampradaya whose lead singer was Govinda Ghosh. He is sometimes described as a branch of Chaitanya, or as a branch of Gadadhara Pandit.

Vakresvara's disappearance day is the sixth day of the waxing moon in the month of Asharh.

Sri Vamana Avatara

The fifth among the Dasavatara is Sri Vamana-avatara. There are innumerable lila-avataras. Among them are twenty-five chief lila-avataras of which Sri Vamanadeva is the eighteenth. All the lila-avataras have been mentioned in the previous description of Matsya-avatara. Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha are the original catur-vyuha, or original four expanded forms of Sri Krishna in Dvaraka. They are prabhava-vilasa (four-handed forms) of Sri Krishna. The majestic expansion of Sri Krishna, Narayana, who resides in Vaikuntha, also has His catur-vyuha, which is known as the second manifestation of four expanded forms. Each form of this second catur-vyuha again expands into three forms. Among the first manifestation of expanded forms, Pradyumna expands into three forms known as Trivikrama, Vamana and Sridhara. Thus, each form of the second catur-vyuha expands into three forms, which totals twelve, and These are the Presiding Deities of the twelve months.

The Deity of the month of Ashadha is Sri Vamanadeva. Vaishnavas wear holy marks of twelve hari-mandiras (temples of the Lord in the form of markings known as tilaka) on different parts of the upper body. Among them, the hari-mandira on the left side of the abdomen is fixed for the Presiding Deity Vamanadeva. The catur-vyuha in the superior transcendental spiritual sky and Their twenty vilasa forms are differentiated by the positions of holding divine weapons in four hands. Sri Vamanadeva holds the conch, disk, mace and lotus. It can be seen that Kesava resides in Mathura; Jagannatha in Nilacala; Madhava in Prayag; Madhusudana in Mandara; Vasudeva, Padmanabha and Janardana in Anandaranya; Varadaraja Vishnu in Vishnu Kanci and Hari in Mayapura. In a similar manner, Vamanadeva also has a dwelling place in the universe. One day of Brahma or one kalpa consists of 14 manvantaras (each manvantara consists of 71 cycles of the four yugas). The 14 manifestations of the Supreme Lord in these 14 manvantaras are known as manvantara-avataras. Sri Vamanadeva is the manvantara-avatara in Vaivasvata-the seventh manvantara.

In the 8th Canto of Srimad-Bhagavatam, Srila Krishna Dvaipayana Vedavyasa

Muni has given detailed accounts of Lord Vamanadeva's pastime of appearance, the capturing of the three planetary systems from Bali Maharaja (on the pretext of asking for only three steps of land) and the eventual awarding of the Sutala planet to Bali. A short description of these topics is given here.

Describing the reigns of the fourteen Manus (Svayambhuva, Svarocisha, Uttama, Tamasa, Raivata, Cakshusha, Vaivasvata, Savarni, Daksha-savarni, Brahma-savarni, Dharma-savarni, Rudra-savarni, Deva-savarni and Indra-savarni), Sri Sukadeva Gosvami has mentioned the pastime of Bali and Vamanadeva, which took place during the reign of Savarni Manu of the eighth manvantara.

Once, when Bali Maharaja was the king of the demons, Indra, the king of the demigods, killed Bali Maharaja and his chief generals in a fight between the demigods and the demons. When Devaraja Indra began killing the demons with the vow of annihilating the entire demon dynasty, grandfather Brahma came to know about it and sent Narada Rsi to stop him from such a heinous act. When Narada Rsi informed Indra about the order of Brahma to stop killing the demons, only then did he cease.

Sukracarya, the family priest of the demons, revived Bali Maharaja and his chief generals and demons by using the art of mrita-samjivani. For the benefit of the demons, Sukracarya advised Bali Maharaja to arrange for a visvajit-yajna to be performed by brahmanas of the Bhrigu dynasty. Bali Maharaja, following the order of his spiritual master, collected offerings for the sacrifice. Sukracarya and the brahmana descendants of Bhrigu performed the sacrifice systematically. Various kinds of weapons including an inexhaustible quiver were produced in the sacrifice. Bali Maharaja became greatly powerful by the power of mantra and besieged heaven with his army of demons. When the demigods informed Devaraja Indra about this, he came prepared with his army to fight. However, upon seeing the splendor of Bali Maharaja, he became bewildered. What to speak of fighting, Indra did not even have the courage to stand before Bali Maharaja. Therefore, the worried and frightened Indra approached his spiritual master Brihaspati, and inquired about the amazing strength of the demons. "What is the reason behind this extraordinary power of the demons?" he asked. Brihaspati, the spiritual master of the demigods replied, "The brahmana descendants of Bhrigu who are dear to Sri Hari, are backing Bali Maharaja. Bali Maharaja has become powerful by the yajna performed by them. If you go to fight with him at this time, you will be unable to win. You will certainly be badly defeated. Therefore my advice to all of you is that you give up your kingdom of

heaven and hide in space."

On the advice of Brihaspati, Indra and the other demigods left heaven and began to live clandestinely in space. Aditi[1], the mother of the demigods, was saddened to see her sons living in this condition without a kingdom. She stopped taking food and water and existed in a depressed state. Because she was constantly sorrowful and indifferent to all the housework, her home lost its beauty. Day by day she became increasingly emaciated. Mother Aditi anxiously began to wait for her husband Kasyapa Rsi who was engaged in performing austerities. After a long period of time, Kasyapa Rsi returned home having finished his austerities. Surprised at seeing the house lusterless and his wife weak and pale, he asked Aditi why this was so. Aditi weepingly replied to her husband, "The demons have driven our sons out of the kingdom of heaven. I pray to your lotus feet that you will please take action to expel the demons and return my sons to their kingdom. Until my sons regain the kingdom of heaven, my sorrow will not be alleviated." Hearing the inappropriate words of his wife, he tried to pacify her by speaking the essence of supreme truth. He said, "The demigods are our friends and the demons are our enemies; this vision of the duality of enemy and friend only occurs to those who are infatuated by the illusory energy (maya) of the Supreme Lord. Due to forgetfulness of the Supreme Lord, people experience the negation of knowledge (viparita-buddhi) of their own constitutional position, and consequently all sorts of troubles and difficulties originate. Actually, all are engaged in a mutual interrelationship of love by dint of their relationship with the Supreme Lord. A pure understanding of knowledge does not include any vision of enmity. My advice to you is that you should give up bodily misidentifications along with false relations and worship Hari with full dedication."

Mother Aditi took to heart the teachings of her husband, which were full of knowledge. Nonetheless, she persistently requested that her sons should regain the kingdom of heaven. Mother Aditi repeatedly implored that unless her sons returned to their residence in heaven, she would be unable to find peace of mind. It would seem from these words of Mother Aditi that much like a materially entangled jiva illusioned by maya, she was aggrieved by affection for her sons. But this was not the actual case. In reality, the Lord wanted to appear as the son of Kasyapa Rsi and Mother Aditi, to bestow His mercy upon them. He was in fact inspiring Mother Aditi and compelling her to speak like this just to fulfil His objective.

Kasyapa Rsi attentively heard the words of Aditi, and realising the actual purpose of her requests he said to his wife, “If it is your strong desire that the demigods are to return to their kingdom of heaven, then you will have to perform the Kesava-toshana vrata (a fast to please Kesava) for twelve days[2] by drinking only milk. Other than Lord Kesava, no one will be able to fulfil this desire of yours.” As per the instructions of Kasyapa Ashi, Mother Aditi performed the Kesava-toshana vrata, subjecting herself to severe austerity while observing proper usage and custom. At the end of the fast, the Lord appeared before Mother Aditi and assured her that He would appear as her son at the proper time under auspicious indications and would fulfil her desire.

As predicted, at an auspicious time the Lord appeared in the heart of Kasyapa Ashi. Kasyapa then imparted divine knowledge to Aditi through initiation. The Lord first appeared in the heart of Aditi and then entered into her womb. When Brahma and other demigods realised that the Supreme Personality of Godhead had appeared, they began to offer prayers to the womb of Aditi. On the twelfth day of the month of Sravana, at the very auspicious moment of the Abhijit star, Lord Narayana appeared from the womb of Aditi as Syamasundara (sweet and dark complexioned) Pitambara (dressed in yellow garments) holding a conch, disc, club, and lotus.

Kasyapa Rsi and Mother Aditi saw that as soon as the Lord had appeared before them in a four handed form, He miraculously assumed the form of a dwarf (Vamana), although he was perfectly proportioned. Kasyapa Rsi and Mother Aditi became filled with great bliss upon seeing the beautiful form of Vamana, and were completely overwhelmed with affection for their child. All the birth samskaras (purificatory rituals) of the child were performed according to the directions of the scriptures. At the sacred thread ceremony of Vamanadeva, the sun-god himself instructed Him in the Gayatri mantra, Brihaspati presented Him with the sacred thread, Kasyapa gave Him a straw belt (a girdle), Mother Earth gave Him a deerskin to sit on and the moon-god who is the king of the forests, gave Him a brahma-danda (the rod of a brahmacari). Mother Aditi gave Him kaupina-basana (sacred underwear), the Presiding Deity of heaven offered Him an umbrella, Lord Brahma gave Him a water-pot, the seven sages offered Him kusa grass, Sarasvati gave Him a string of rudraksha beads, Kuvera gave Him a pot for begging alms, and Bhagavati, the mother of the universe, gave Him alms.

Bali Maharaja had begun the performance of a fire-sacrifice in the field known as Bhrigukaccha on the bank of the Narmada River. He was a greatly charitable

person. Brahmanas who were desirous of his charity were going to the place where the sacrifice was being held. A new brahmana will beg alms after the sacred thread ceremony. Following this custom, Vamanadeva set out for the sacrificial arena of Bali Maharaja, holding His danda, waterpot and umbrella to beg alms from him. Vamanadeva was walking while holding His umbrella. Being small in size, He was completely covered by the umbrella. When the brahmanas saw Him from a distance, they thought that the umbrella was walking by itself, so they were very astonished. Later, they understood that a brahmana boy of small stature was underneath the umbrella. The brahmanas tried very hard to overtake him, but were unable to do so. Vamanadeva bewildered all the brahmanas with His maya and became the first to arrive at the sacrificial arena. The auspicious arrival of Vamanadeva in His brilliant effulgent form diminished the brilliance of the sacrificial fire. Understanding that a great personality had arrived, Bali Maharaja, his priests and others present there, rose up from their seats and welcomed the Lord by offering proper respects. Considering Him to be a great brahmana, Bali Maharaja offered his obeisances and then sprinkled on his own head the water with which he had washed the Lord's lotus feet. After worshipping Him according to the proper customs, Bali Maharaja spoke to Lord Vamanadeva as follows: "You have surely come here to ask me for something. Therefore, whatever You desire, be it wealth or a kingdom, I shall give it to You. If You have the desire to marry, I shall give You a qualified girl as per Your desire."

The dwarf Vamanadeva replied, "I know the previous members of your very exalted dynasty. You have taken birth in the dynasty of the uncommon warriors Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakasipu. Your grandfather Prahlada was a maha-bhagavata. Just by remembering him, the jiva (living entity) is purified. Your father Virocana, after promising charity to a brahmana, never failed to fulfil his promise. I know that you also will not refuse to fulfil your promise. I ask you for three steps of land."

Upon hearing this, Bali Maharaja smilingly said, "You have narrated those great deeds of my ancestors which even I had no knowledge of. However, You have begged for a very insignificant thing. I see that You are a little brahmana; therefore, Your intelligence is also little. What purpose could be served by obtaining three paces of land, measured by Your small steps? Do you know who I am? I am the owner of the three worlds. By my desire I can give You all of Jambudvipa (Asia). After accepting alms from me, if You beg alms from anyone else, it will disgrace my name as a great charitable person. Therefore I request

You to please reconsider this matter."

Sri Vamanadeva said, "I know that you are the owner of the three worlds and that you can give Me many things. But I am a brahmana. A brahmana should be satisfied with little. If brahmanas desire many objects of sense gratification, they lose their spiritual potency. One's desire for sense gratification never ends. If you give Me Jambudvipa, I will desire the whole earth. Next I will desire Rasatala, then heaven, and finally the position of Brahma. There is no end to this. Material things are of no use to the soul. As charity given by you, I shall be satisfied with three paces of land as measured by My steps."

At that time, Sukracarya, the spiritual master of the demons, was also nearby. He understood that Lord Vishnu had appeared in the form of a dwarf brahmana to fulfil the motive of the demigods. On the pretext of begging for three steps of land, He would take the three worlds from his disciple Bali, leaving him bereft of his kingdom. Foolishly, Bali Maharaja, not knowing the real identity of this little dwarf brahmana, was inclined to fulfil His request.

Sukracarya, desiring the welfare of his disciple, spoke to Bali Maharaja, "Bali! You do not know the real identity of this dwarf brahmana who has come to you. He is the Supreme Lord Himself. To fulfil the motive of the demigods, He has come to beg charity from you. On the pretext of asking for three steps of land, He will take away the three worlds from you. Where will you live then? What will you do? With no wealth, how will you perform your charitable and religious duties? Therefore my instruction to you is that you should not give Him the land." Hearing these words of his guru, Bali Maharaja said, "I have given my word to a brahmana. How can I break my promise? How can I tell a lie? If this dwarf brahmana is the Supreme Lord Himself, where can I find a better or more qualified candidate for charity? Even if I refuse to give, He will take it by force. Being my guru, why are you creating such obstacles? On the other hand if He is only a dwarf brahmana, how much land can He take by the measure of His three steps? I will not be able to abandon the decision that I have made to give in charity now."

Sukracarya again tried to convince Bali by saying, "Look Bali, in some special circumstances, one should even tell falsehoods for the protection of dharma and wealth; for example, how much wealth one has. By not keeping this secret, one's wealth does not remain safe. If one's wealth is not safe, dharma is not preserved. As soon as you pronounce the words for your promise of charity, this dwarf

brahmana will assume a very large Trivikrama form. He will occupy the sky with His body, and with his two steps He will cover the three worlds. You will then not be able to keep your word. Therefore, you should never give Him the three steps of land. This, again, is my instruction." Even after instructing him in this way, when he saw that Bali Maharaja would not renege on his promise, Sukracarya became filled with rage and cursed Bali to lose his opulence.

Bali Maharaja held true to his promise even after being cursed by his guru. He began to draw water from the water-pot with the intention of offering charity, but while doing so, he saw that there was no water coming out of the pot due to the spout being blocked. The reason for this was that Sukracarya had been unable to tolerate the foolishness of his disciple, and out of affection for him had entered into the waterpot, thereby preventing the water from flowing out. Bali Maharaja then began to clear the blocked spout with the help of a stick from a broom. This destroyed one eye of Sukracarya. It is said that because of his obstructing service to the Supreme Lord, Sukracarya became known as 'Kana Sukra' (Sukra, blind in one eye). However this incident has not been mentioned in the Srimad-Bhagavatam.

As Bali Maharaja recited the words of his promise with water from the water-pot, the dwarf brahmana assumed an immense Trivikrama form, occupying the sky with His body, and then took over the three worlds with His two steps. The inconceivably powerful Supreme Lord's lotus feet encroached upon the three worlds and reached Satyaloka. Seeing the Lord's lotus feet, Brahma and other demigods became very pleased. They worshipped those lotus feet according to proper custom. Vamanadeva then asked Bali Maharaja for one more pace of land. Lord Vamana warned, "Breaking your promise after giving your word will be an irreligious act."

Bali Maharaja replied, "I am bereft of everything but I am not upset about this. However, I am unable to fulfil my promise and, due to this fact, I am sad and in mental agony. You have acquired everything of mine with Your two steps. There is nothing else of mine remaining to give." Upon seeing that everything had been lost to Lord Vamanadeva, the demons became determined to recapture their kingdom. When the demons approached Vamanadeva to kill Him, a wonderful Narayani army emanated from the body of Vishnu and began to fight with the demons. Seeing the killing of the demons by the Narayani forces, Bali Maharaja asked them to stop the fight. He said, "Our time is now inauspicious, so the result of the fight will also be inauspicious." The bird king Garuda,

understanding the desire of Lord Vishnu, bound Bali Maharaja with the ropes of Varuna. When Bali Maharaja was bound with ropes, a universal cry of distress spread everywhere in the heavens and on earth. Then Vamanadeva approached Bali Maharaja and said, "In your dynasty, no one has broken his word after giving it to a brahmana. You took an oath that you would give Me three steps of land. Why are you not giving Me one more step of land? You are religious, yet you are behaving irreligiously."

Bali Maharaja's wife, Vindhyavali, was a pious and devotionally inclined lady. She said to her husband, "You have given Vamanadeva whatever material possessions you had, but you have not given your very self." Bali Maharaja was greatly delighted upon hearing the timely and wise words of his devotionally inclined wife. He directed Vamanadeva toward his head as a place for the remaining step of land. At that time, a foot emerged from the lotus navel of Vamanadeva and rested on the head of Bali Maharaja. Bali Maharaja achieved the touch of those lotus feet, which is rare even for Brahma and other demigods. On witnessing the great fortune of Bali Maharaja, kettledrums sounded in heaven and flowers showered down. Being greatly pleased, Lord Vamanadeva spoke to Bali Maharaja, "I am very pleased with you. You have not fallen from your dharma. You did not deviate from the truth in spite of being cursed by your gurudeva. Until now you were the giver and I was the receiver. Now I am the giver and you are the receiver. I shall give you whatever you want." Having completely surrendered to the Lord, Bali Maharaja did not ask Him for his lost wealth like a materialistic person. He prayed, "O Lord Vamanadeva! May Your soothing lotus feet, which You have placed on my head, always remain there."

Service of the Lord and self-surrender to His lotus feet never result in loss for anyone. Out of foolishness, the ignorant living entity prays for insignificant things from the Supreme Lord. One can achieve the completely blissful Supreme Lord by sincere surrender or devotion without ulterior motive. Bali Maharaja achieved the Supreme Lord by the atma-nivedana (self-surrender) process of bhakti.

Upon seeing the devotion and great fortune of his grandson, Prahlada Maharaja felt very happy and glorious. He had tried very hard to make his son Virocana a devotee, but Virocana had not become so and his propensity for demoniac tendencies caused Prahlada pain in his heart. There was now no limit to his joy upon seeing his grandson as a devotee. Being pleased with Bali Maharaja, Vamanadeva awarded him the Sutala planet, which is supremely blissful like

Vaikuntha, and ordered the Sudarsana cakra to protect that abode of a bhakta in every way.

Lord Vamanadeva, the protector of brahmana-dharma, saw Sukracarya, the foremost of the Bhrigu dynasty brahmanas and guru of the demons, standing hesitantly nearby. He said to Sukracarya, “Your disciple Bali Maharaja has undergone many difficulties. Please perform the yajna again for his welfare.” Sukracarya replied, “My disciple has seen You; he has chanted Your name and glories. Your rare lotus feet have been placed upon his head. Is my disciple still so impure that I have to perform a yajna to bless him?”

mantratas tantratas chidram
desa-kalarha-vastutah
sarvam karoti nischidram
anusankirtanam tava
(Srimad-Bhagavatam 8.23.16)

“There may be discrepancies in pronouncing mantras, observing the regulative principles in serial order and moreover, there may be discrepancies in regard to time, place, person, articles and paraphernalia. But when Your Lordship’s holy name is chanted, everything becomes faultless.”

In the Vamana Purana written by Sri Vedavyasa Muni, the pastimes of Vamanadeva have been described in the context of a discussion between Lomaharshana Suta and other sages. Even after the death of Hiranyakasipu, the demons were in constant control. The demigods were driven from everywhere and the demon kingdom spread all over the three worlds. The demons began performing many rituals and sacrifices. Two demons named Maya and Sambara became very famous. Everywhere, religious duties were performed without difficulty. Four-legged dharma was presiding; however, one leg of adharma had entered nominally. At that time, Bali was enthroned as the king of the demons and everyone was satisfied because of this. Due to Bali Maharaja’s defeating Devaraja Indra, Lakshmi Devi became pleased and entered into his body. On Lakshmi’s entering into Bali, all the goddesses became pleased with Bali Maharaja and he became full of all qualities and achieved immense wealth. Having no place for the demigods, Devaraja Indra went to Mother Aditi on top of Mount Sumeru and informed her of his defeat at the hands of the demons. Understanding that only the thousand-headed (sahasra-sirsa) Narayana could rescue the demigods from this difficulty, Mother Aditi sent Devaraja Indra along

with the demigods to her husband Kasyapa Ashi. As per their mother's instruction, all the demigods went to the third prajapati (progenitor), Kasyapa Ashi, and offered him their obeisances. Kasyapa Rsi listened to their problems and then sent them to Brahma in Brahmaloka. Understanding their desire, Brahma asked them to pray to the creator of the universe, the Supreme Lord, on the northern bank of the Ocean of Milk. He told them, "During your worship of the Supreme Lord, you will hear His infallible words saying that He will accept the prayers of Kasyapa Rsi and Mother Aditi, and fulfil their desire by appearing as their son."

Being ordered by Lord Brahma and after crossing oceans, mountains, forests and rivers with great hardship, the demigods reached Kasyapa Ashi. Along with him they reached the place known as Amrita (ambrosia or nectar[3]). Kasyapa Rsi then engaged in a vow, which lasted for thousands of years. The demigods also followed this severe penance (tapoyoga). The great soul Kasyapa recited the Vedic paramastava (supreme prayer) for the pleasure of Narayana and to fulfil Mother Aditi's desire for a son. Thereafter, Kasyapa Ashi, along with his wife, went to their asrama in the forest of Kurukshetra. Mother Aditi performed severe penances at that place for ten thousand years. Being satisfied by the prayers of Aditi, Supreme Lord Vasudeva appeared before her. When Lord Vasudeva told Mother Aditi to ask for a boon, Aditi prayed that her son Indra could regain the kingdom of heaven. The Supreme Lord said, "So be it!" and assured her that He would fulfil her desire by appearing as her son. Thereafter, upon Aditi's becoming pregnant, Sri Krishna appeared in her womb. Due to the entrance of Madhusudana into the womb of Aditi, the strength of the demons became diminished. Bali Maharaja became powerless as if burnt by fire or cursed by a brahmana. He inquired about the reason for this from his grandfather, Prahlada. Prahlada Maharaja, after thinking for a while, said to Bali Maharaja, "Do not consider this sort of incident to be ordinary. It is now necessary to think about counteracting it." After meditating for some time, Prahlada Maharaja realised that the Lord had appeared in the womb of Aditi in the form of Vamana. It was He who had abducted the splendor of the demons. Bali Maharaja, now knowing the reason for the loss of his splendor, further inquired from his grandfather, "Who is this Sri Hari who you say is the cause of our fear? We have hundreds of mighty and powerful daityas (demons). Vasudeva Krishna does not have enough power to compare with even one of these." Prahlada Maharaja, the best of the daityas, became angry upon hearing such blasphemous words against Vishnu from his grandson, and cursed him that the demons would soon be destroyed. "I do not consider anyone other than Sri Krishna to be the protector of this material

world. May I see you in the position of losing your kingdom within a short time."

Bali Maharaja, upon hearing these unpleasant words from his grandfather, became filled with remorse and repeatedly and pitiably begged forgiveness for his thoughtless words. Satisfied on seeing his grandson fallen at his lotus feet, Prahlada Maharaja said, "Son! I cursed you in anger. My curse will not go in vain. However, you should not be sad about that. Become devoted to Acyuta-He will be your rescuer."

Ten months later, Lord Govinda was born in the form of a vamana (dwarf). Everywhere auspiciousness and happiness awakened in the hearts of all living beings. With the advent of Vamanadeva, Lord Brahma completed His jata-karma (birth rituals) and other samskaras and offered many beautiful prayers to the Lord. Satisfied by these prayers, Vamanadeva said that He was now repeating to Lord Brahma the promise that He had first made to Indra and then to Aditi: He would see to it that Indra would be reinstated as the ruling power of the universe.

At the sacred thread ceremony of Vamanadeva, Brahma gave Him a krishnajin (the skin of a black antelope), Brihaspati gave Him the sacred thread, Marici gave Him a palasa danda (the rod of a brahmacari), Vasishtha gave Him a water-pot, Angira gave him a kusacira (a piece of cloth made of kusa grass), Pulaha gave Him a mat to sit on, and Pulastya gave Him two cloths of yellow colour. After being worshipped by the demigods, Vamanadeva, in matted locks and holding a rod, waterpot and umbrella, set off for the sacrificial arena of Bali Maharaja. As Vamanadeva was walking, the earth became free of miseries and became restless. The great serpent Ananta came from Rasatala and began to help Vamanadeva. By seeing Lord Vamanadeva, one's fear of snakes dissipates. Upon seeing the earth in this over-excited state, Bali Maharaja inquired as to the reason from Sukracarya. Sukracarya replied, "The cause of the universe, the eternal Sri Hari has appeared in the home of Kasyapa in the form of Vamana. He will come to your yajna. The earth is becoming restless by the deflection of His feet." Hearing this from Sukracarya, Bali Maharaja considered himself to be very fortunate as he would be able to have a glimpse of the Supreme Lord, Vamanadeva. "The Supreme Lord is making His auspicious arrival. What should my duty be now?" Bali Maharaja asked Sukracarya. Sukracarya replied, "O king of the demons! According to Vedic directions, the demigods are enjoyers of the offerings of yajna, but you have made only the demons enjoyers of those offerings. Lord Sri Hari, although satisfied as the maintainer, is coming for the

fulfilment of the desire of the demigods. Therefore, whatever He desires from you for the welfare of the demigods, you should clearly tell Him that you will not be able to give to Him."

In reply Bali Maharaja said, "O brahmana, how will I be able to say this? Even if an ordinary person asks me for something, I am unable to say no to him. If in place of that, Govinda Himself comes to me as a beggar, how will I be able to refuse Him? I can give up my life but I cannot refuse Him. I have heard about the glories of charity from you. You are now expressing a different opinion. You should not obstruct me in the matter of giving in charity." At that time, Vamanadeva appeared in the sacrificial arena of Bali Maharaja along with Brihaspati and other demigods. Then Bali spoke to his priest Sukracarya, "Lord Sri Hari Himself has come to our home, so He should ask for whatever He wishes."

When Vamanadeva entered the sacrificial arena, all the demons became lusterless due to His splendor. However, Vasishtha, Visvamitra, Garga Rsi and other top-most sages became greatly blessed upon seeing Vamanadeva. Vamanadeva praised the yajna of Bali Maharaja, as well as its organisers and priests. They in turn also expressed their gratitude to Vamanadeva.

With great devotion, Bali Maharaja worshipped Lord Govinda by washing His feet with water and offering oblations, saying, "O best of men, please ask for whatever You wish, be it gold, jewels, elephants, buffaloes, cloth, ornaments, wives, cows, copper, silver and all other metals or even the whole earth."

Although smiling, Vamanadeva spoke with a serious expression, "O King, to satisfy the terrible fire of my hunger, all I ask from you is three steps of land. Please give gold or villages to whoever asks for them."

Bali Maharaja said, "Your purpose will not be served by three steps of land. Please ask for land measured by thousands of steps." Even then, Vamanadeva asked only for three steps of land. Bali Maharaja then took water in his hand and made a promise to give Vamanadeva land measured by only three steps. Immediately, Vamanadeva assumed a gigantic form that was greatly splendid and all-encompassing. All the mighty demons, upon seeing this dazzling form of Vishnu, achieved the state which insects assume upon seeing fire. All-powerful Vishnu then covered the sky and three worlds in a very short time. Defeating the demons, He awarded rulership of the three worlds to Indra. Thereafter, Lord

Vishnu gave the Patala region below the earth planet, to Bali Maharaja. Sarvesvara Vishnu also told Bali, “After the passing of the Vaivasvata-manvantara and upon the arrival of the Savarni-manvantara, you will become Indra. Now I have given the region controlled by you to Indra. Whatever happens, as per My order, you should stay in the Sutalapuri region of Patala, which is charming, full of many qualities and beauties, and enjoy the sraka-garland, sandalwood and many other types of earthly pleasures.”

Bali Maharaja replied, “O Lord, by receiving these items of enjoyment from You, may I not forget You. Please bless me that I may remember You.” In this way, Sri Hari gave the kingdom of the three worlds to Indra and blessings to Bali Maharaja and then disappeared.

By hearing this pastime of Bali and Vamanadeva, those who have lost a kingdom will retrieve it and those who have become separated from their objective will also achieve it. Brahmanas will acquire knowledge of the Absolute Truth. Kshatriyas will become expert in conquering the earth and vaisyas will achieve an increase in wealth. Sudras will attain happiness and good fortune, and anyone who hears this will be delivered from all sins.

Near the end of Vamana Purana, there is a short description of the binding of Bali along with a description of Bali Maharaja’s wife, Vindhyavali, and their son Banasura.

chalayasi vikramane balim adbhuta-vamana
pada-nakha-nira-janita-jana-pavana
kesava dhrita-vamana-rupa jaya jagadisa hare
(Sri Jayadeva’s Dasavatara-stotra, 5th Verse)

“O Kesava! You assumed the form of Vamana to trick the great demon Bali Maharaja by Your steps, and to purify all living entities by the water that emanated from the nails of Your lotus feet. All glories unto You, Lord of the universe.”

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Two of Kashyapa Rsi's wives-Diti and Aditi are mentioned here in connection with this topic. The sons of Diti are demons and the sons of Aditi are demigods. The demons and the demigods are stepbrothers.

[2] One celestial day is equal to one year of the human beings, i.e., 365 days.

[3] This material brahmana of fourteen worlds, including heaven, is non-eternal. From the churning of the milk ocean, amrta (nectar of immortality) emerges. By drinking this amrta, the demigods become immortal in the sense that they gain extraordinary longevity, but they do not become literally immortal. At the time of universal dissolution, all the brahmanas or material universes are destroyed, along with the demigods.

---From "Dasavatara - The Ten Manifestations of God"

Sri Varaha Avatara

The third incarnation among the Ten Incarnations is Varaha avatara, or the Boar incarnation. The story of the lila-avataras has been discussed previously in the description of Matsya avatara.

When Brahmaji received the order to carry out the creation, he started thinking about the subject matters of creation. At that moment, a male named Svayambhuva Manu and a female named Satarupa manifested from his body. By the desire of Brahma, Svayambhuva Manu accepted Satarupa as his wife for the purpose of creation. Seeing the earth submerged in the water of annihilation and desiring to seek a dwelling place for the living beings, Manu approached his father Brahmaji and prayed to him to rescue the earth. When Brahmaji saw the earth submerged in the water, he thought for a long time about how it could be rescued. He had earlier established the earth after removing all the water but he could not understand why the earth had sunk into the water again. He had been appointed for the work of creation but the earth had become inundated in a deluge and had sunk down to the Rasatala planetary system. How was the

creation to be done? How was the earth to be rescued?

Even after much effort, Brahmaji was not able to think of any solution. At last, he took shelter of the Supreme Lord Visnu. While Brahmaji was still deep in thought, a small boar the size of the tip of a thumb manifested from his nose. But the most surprising thing is that the small boar expanded in front of Brahmaji and within moments, filled the sky and assumed a form as big as an elephant. Brahma, together with the great brahmanas like Marici, as well as the Four Kumaras and Svayambhuva Manu saw the transcendental Varaha form and began to discuss among themselves. Lord Brahma thought that this was some denizen of the transcendental world in disguise; traveling in the form of a boar. ‘Oh! What a great surprise! It is very wonderful that this expanding Varaha form has come out of my nostril. Is Sri Hari, the Lord of sacrifice, hiding His form and trying to agitate us?'

In this way, while Brahma was deliberating with his associates, Sri Hari roared tumultuously like the great mountain Giriraja. The omnipotent Sri Hari enlivened Brahma and the other highly elevated brahmanas by again roaring with His uncommon voice. The sound of His roar was so sweet that it destroyed all the miseries of the hearer. Brahma, Svayambhuva Manu, and other sages who reside on Janaloka, Tapaloka and Satyaloka, chanted auspicious mantras from the Vedas as offerings to Varahadeva. Lord Visnu in the form of Varaha accepted the prayers of Brahma and other sages and for the benefit of the demigods, entered into the waters of annihilation. Before entering into the water, Lord Varaha rose into the sky lashing His tail. The Lord raised the hair on His shoulders and scattered the clouds in the sky with His hooves. With raised hairs and white tusks, and with luminous effulgence, the Lord's form was brilliant. This is Sri Hari's unique transcendental pastime. Just the remembrance of it causes shivering in the body. He was omnipotent and omniscient, yet like an animal, He searched for the earth by the sense of smell. His external appearance was fearful; however, He pleased the sages engaged in offering prayers by glancing over them and entered into the water. His dive into the water with his thunderbolt-like body divided the ocean. The ocean prayed to Lord out of fear, "Please protect me, O Supreme Lord!"

The Lord of all sacrifices penetrated the water with His hooves, and in the depths of the Rasatala ocean, He saw the earth lying there as it was carried by Him in his stomach during the time of devastation. Lord Varaha lifted the earth on His tusks and appeared very splendid. At that time, a very powerful demon

named Hiranyaksa challenged Him with a huge mace. Lord Varaha expressed great anger. Thereupon, Lord Varaha killed the demon within the water, just as a lion kills an elephant. The body, head and face of the Lord became red with the blood of the demon. (see note) The sages headed by Brahma, offered prayers to the Supreme Lord with folded hands. The Lord, being thus satisfied with the prayers of the great sages, placed the earth on the water with His hooves. There is one point to understand here.

In the Laghu-Bhagavatamrta, it says, "Lord Varaha appeared twice in one kalpa (day of Brahma). He appeared during the Svayambhuva-manvantara from Brahma's nostril to rescue the earth, and during the sixth manvantara (Caksusa-manvantara), He appeared to rescue the earth and kill Hiranyaksa."

According the Bhagavatamrta, in Uttanapada's lineage, the son of Praceta was Daksa, the daughter of Daksa was Diti, and the son of Diti was Hiranyaksa. At the time of Varahadeva's appearance or in the beginning of the kalpa, Manu did not have any children. So how could Hiranyaksa have taken birth in the reign of Svayambhuva Manu? Therefore, it is seen that in the Bhagavatam, in answer to Vidura's question, Maitreya Muni has described the pastimes of Lord Varaha in both the Svayambhuva devastation and Caksusa devastation. Svayambhuva Manu and Satarupa gave birth to two sons, Priyavrata and Uttanapada, and three daughters, Akuti, Devahuti and Prasuti:

dvitiyam tu bhavayasya
rasatala-gatam mahim
uddharisyann upadatta
yajnesah saukaram vapuh
(S.B. 1.3.7)

"For the creation and for the welfare of the earth which had gone to the nether regions of the universe, the supreme enjoyer of all sacrifices accepted His second incarnation as a boar."

Here, Lord Varaha is described as the second incarnation:

yatrodyatah ksiti-taloddharanaya bibhrat
kraudim tanum sakala-yajna-mayim anantah
antar-maharnava upagatam adi-daityam
tam damstrayadrim iva vajra-dharo dadara

(S.B. 2.7.1)

"The unlimitedly powerful Lord assumed the form of a boar for the rescue of the earth and pierced the first demon Hiranyaksa with His tusks."

jalakridasu ruciram
varahim rupamasthitah
adhrsyam manasapyanyair
vamayam brahma-sajnitam
prthivyuddharanarthaya
pravisya ca rasatalam
damstrayabhyujjaharai na
matmadharo dharadharah

drstva damstragravinyastam
prthivim prathita paurusam
astavan jana-lokastham
siddhi brahmarsayo harim
(Matsya Purana 6.8-10)

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is imperceptible to the mind, who plays beautifully in the water, and who is the knower of all knowledge, appeared as Varaha to save the life-giving earth. He entered into the depths of the ocean and rescued the earth with His tusks. Seeing the earth resting between the tusks of the Lord, the sages of Janaloka offered prayers to the most celebrated Sri Hari."

Here, it is said that Lord Narayana, the cause of creation and destruction, appeared as Varaha:

vasati dasana-sikhare dharani tava lagna
sasini kalanka-kaleva nimagna
kesava dhrta-sukara-rupa jaya jagadisa hare
(Jayadeva's Dasavatara Stotra)

"O Kesava! O Supreme Lord who have assumed the form of a boar! O Lord! The planet earth rested on Your tusks, and it appeared like the moon engraved with spots."

When the Lord manifested in the womb of Devaki while she was in the prison of Kamsa, Brahma offered prayers to the Lord. This is the last verse of those prayers:

matsyasva-kacchapa-nrsimha-varaha-hamsa-
rajanya-vipra-vibudhesu krtavatarah
tvam pasi nas tri-bhuvanam ca yathadhunesa
bharam bhuvo hara yaduttama vandanam te
(SB 10.2.40)

"O supreme controller, Your Lordship previously accepted incarnations as Matsya (fish), Asvagriva (horse), Kurma (tortoise), Nrsimhadeva, Varaha (boar), Hamsa (swan), Lord Ramacandra, Parasurama and, among the demigods, Vamanadeva, to protect the entire world by Your mercy. Now please protect us again by Your mercy by diminishing the disturbances in this world. O Krsna, best of the Yadus, we respectfully offer our obeisances unto You."

Notes:
1. In the depths of the Rasatala water, the demon Hiranyaksa misunderstood Lord Varaha to be only a boar, and considering Him to possess meager strength, spoke many deriding words to Him. The Lord, however, returned his taunts with equal vigor. Lord Varaha dodged the violent mace-blows of the angry demon Hiranyaksa, and thus a violent mace-fight began between the two. Lord Brahma prayed to the Supreme Lord that in the demoniac hours, the power of the demon would increase manifold. Therefore, before that time arrived, He ought to kindly kill the demon in the loka-samhara-karini hours and auspicious period known as abhijit.

2. Hiranyaksa displayed his prowess by using the mace and trident, and finally by casting illusions and striking hard with his fists, but the Lord killed the demon with the blow of His mace. This pastime has been described in the 3rd canto, chapters 18 & 19 of the Srimad-Bhagavatam.

Sri Vrindavan Das Thakur

vedavyaso ya evasid daso vrindavano'dhuna
sakha yah kusumapidah karyatas tam samavishat

Vedavyasa became Vrindavan Das Thakur. Krishna's friend Kusumapida also entered into him for special purposes. (Gaura-ganoddesha-dipika 109)

Vedavyasa described Krishna-lila in the Srimad Bhagavatam. Non-different from Vyasa, Vrindavan Das described Mahaprabhu's lila in his Chaitanya Bhagavat. His book was first called Chaitanya Mangala, but when Locana Das gave the same name to his biography of the Lord, it was dubbed "Chaitanya Bhagavat".

Vrindavan Das's Mother, Narayani

Vrindavan Das was born on the Krishna-dvadashi of the month of Vaishakh in 1429 of the Shaka era (1507 AD). Some say he was born in Mamgachi in the Nabadwip area, others say his birthplace was in Kumarahatta. His father was Vaikunthanatha Vipra, who originally came from Sylhet (Sylhet), his mother Narayani Devi. Narayani was the daughter of Srivasa Pandit's elder brother, Shrinalina Pandit. Kavi Karnapura has also mentioned her name in his Gaura-ganoddesha-dipika:

ambikayah svasa yasin namna shrila-kilimbika
krishnocchishtam prabhuïjana seyam narayani mata

Kilimbika, who used to eat Krishna's remnants, was the younger sister of Krishna's nurse Ambika (Srivasa's wife, Malini). In Mahaprabhu's lila, she became Narayani.

Narayani also achieved fame because she received Gaurasundara's mercy when he gave her his remnants. When the Lord displayed his divine form in the Mahaprakasha in Srivasa Angan, Narayani was only a small child of four, but the Lord made her intoxicated with the ecstasy of prema. Whether born in Mamagachi or in Kumarahatta, Vrindavan Das later lived in the village of Denuria, within the Matreshvara precinct of Burdwan district. Thus Denuria is

considered to be his Shripata. He spent some of his childhood with his mother in Mamagachi, at the home of his maternal grandparents where Narayani was married. Vrindavan Das's Gaura-Nitai deities are still worshiped at the Mamagachi home. When his father died, he and his mother moved to Srivasa's house where he received Mahaprabhu's special blessings.

Vrindavan Das Writes Chaitanya Bhagavat

Because of the copious blessings he received from Nityananda Prabhu, Vrindavan Das is said to have been his initiated disciple.

Vrindavan Das is the recipient of Nityananda's blessings. He is the original Vyasa of Chaitanya's pastimes. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.20.82)

He wrote Chaitanya Bhagavat in 1535 AD. Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami, the author of Chaitanya Charitamrita, has written the following in praise of Vrindavan Das Thakur:

Vrindavan Das, the son of Narayani, wrote the Chaitanya Mangala. Vedavyasa described Krishna's life in the Srimad Bhagavatam and Vrindavan Das is the Vyasa of Chaitanya-lila. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 1.11.54-5)

Just as Vyasadeva compiled Lord Krishna's pastimes in Srimad Bhagavatam, Thakur Vrindavan Das depicted Lord Chaitanya's pastimes. His Chaitanya Mangala annihilates all misfortune. From it, I learned the wonders of Lord Chaitanya and Nityananda and came to know all the most subtle doctrines of devotional service to Krishna. Vrindavan Das Thakur has summarized the essence of the teachings of the Srimad Bhagavatam in his Chaitanya Mangala. If even a Muslim or an atheist should listen to Chaitanya Mangala, he immediately becomes a great Vaishnava. An ordinary human being could not have composed such a sublime work; Lord Chaitanya himself has spoken through the mouth of Vrindavan Das. I offer millions of obeisances unto the lotus feet of Vrindavan Das Thakur who has delivered the entire universe through his book. He was born in the womb of Narayani who eternally enjoys Sri Chaitanya's remnants. How wonderful is his description of the activites of the Lord, simply by hearing which the three worlds have become sanctified! (Chaitanya Charitamrita 1.8.34-42)

Vrindavan Das became so absorbed in the description of Nityananda Prabhu's

lila that he did not elaborately relate all of Mahaprabhu's activities, only summarizing them in abbreviated form. Krishnadas then elaborated on these undescribed activities in his Chaitanya Charitamrita.

Vrindavan Das the authorized biographer of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and equal to Srila Vyasadeva. He has described the Lord's pastimes in such a way as to make them sweeter and sweeter. I shall try as far as possible to fill in the accounts he left out out of fear of excessively enlarging his book. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 1.13.48-9)

Vrindavan Das's Criticisms of Vaishnava Aparadha

Vrindavan Das primarily Mahaprabhu's early activities such as his pastimes as a student, his childhood, his chastisement of the Qazi, his departure from Nabadwip, as well as some aspects of his life in Puri. Vrindavan Das Thakur demonstrated infinite mercy on the fallen souls by warning them:

eta parihare-o je papi ninda kare
tabe lathi maron tar shirera upare

Even after being told how objectionable it is, if someone still blasphemes the Vaishnavas, then I will kick him in the head.

These same words are repeated in the Adi, Madhya and Antya-khandas of the Chaitanya Bhagavat. Some foolish and arrogant persons misunderstand such statements and criticize Vrindavan Das for having made them. Such criticism leads them into the mud of offensiveness. In this connection, the remarks of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur, the founder of the Sri Chaitanya Math and all the Gaudiya Maths, are well worth studying: "'I am ready to kick the heads of those envious and hellish persons who blaspheme Nityananda Prabhu, if by so doing I will be able to forever prevent them from repeating their attempts to show disrespect for the Supreme Lord. Not only that, but if by so doing I can bring about a slear conception of the truth, I will be performing them the greatest service.'

"So says Vrindavan Das, the incarnation of Vyasa and acharya of the Vaishnava faith. If even a single fleck of dust should fall from his foot on the head of a sinful blasphemer, then that person will be blessed and all his sinful conditioning

will inevitably be eradicated. In words which embody the Goddess of Learning and a flood of pure devotion, the Thakur reveals compassion for even the most atheistic blasphemer with the unswerving faith appropriate to a servant of Nityananda Prabhu, the supreme guru. He tells them that though they should be the object of indifference due to their foolishness, nevertheless, because of their ignorance of the truth of Nityananda, their insistence on rushing headlong on the path to hell, and their reluctance to act in their own real self-interest, he and other compassionate Vaishnavas like him who practice and preach the Lord's doctrines unselfishly and disinterestedly act for their welfare. The compassion which is manifested in Vrindavan Das's statement is beyond the comprehension of those who have no understanding of what is truly in their own self interest. Anyone who follows in the footsteps of Vrindavan Das, the incarnation of Vyasa, and both practices and preaches the Vaishnava religion is always engaged in an effort to bring about the ultimate well-being of everyone. Though he may make a superficial show of wishing to punish the enemies of the Lord, in fact he harbors a compassion toward them which knows no limit."

Vrindavan Das Thakur's disappearance day is the Krishna Dashami of Vaishakh. There is some dispute the exact year of his disappearance which was likely 1511 Shaka (1589 AD).

Sri Vyasa Puja

A Lecture given in Mayapur, India on February 12, 1930, by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura Prabhupada

ajnana-timirandhasya jnananjana-salakaya
caksur-unmilitam yena tasmai sri guruve namah

["Obeisances to Sri Gurudeva who has opened our sealed eyes, blinded by the darkness of ignorance, with the spike of the collyrium of knowledge."]

Today is the day of the worship of Sri Guru, and I have come here today for this purpose. I am a person blinded by ignorance. Ignorance is an object resembling darkness. I am the servant of Visnu – I have no other function except the service of Visnu – this mode of thought is being obstructed by the darkness of nescience. I have become blind for the present. Absence of light is darkness; absence of knowledge is ignorance. The only knowledge is the darling of Nanda, who is replete with all knowledge. I, who am averse to the service of the darling of Nanda, am blind.

Darkness assuming form envelopes my eyes. It is for this reason that my function of vision is inoperative, and that there has appeared in me the tendency towards various other activities. By means of my senses – namely, hands, feet, eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin – I am engaged in a variety of work. Because of this, a multitude of diverse dangers confront me. By attempting to walk with these feet I often stumble and fall. By trying to discuss with this mind, I am invoking manifold evil by not being able to understand the real subject of knowledge.

In such an hour of peril, Sri Guru, being moved to pity, manifested in this world. This has been done in order that he may impart to me the knowledge that "You are the servant of the darling of Nanda," and to dispel the darkness of ignorance.

My loss of sense of duty has led me to embark on the enjoyment of worldly objects, and to think such enjoyment is my duty. With this eye I see what is not my duty to see. I see only the bondage that obstructs me from my vision of He whom I ought to see by all means. By being deprived of His sight, I see only this bondage of material enjoyment.

The lotus feet of Sri Guru have imparted to me the light of spiritual knowledge, by removing that bondage of my eyes. Moving aside the bondage of my wrapped eyes and making the lids of my eyes open slightly, Gurudeva instructed me, saying, "Open your eyes a little and see." All these days I had been thinking that I can see by keeping my eyes closed.

For this reason I am performing the duty of offering obeisances to the lotus feet of Sri Guru, by giving up my worldly vanity. This is the first object of offering my worship. To give up the vanity that thinks "I see," "I enjoy," is called "offering obeisances." While I was cherishing the wicked notion that I am the master, Sri Guru opened my eyes and removed my misjudging judgment. I was

following the blind, under the lead of the knowledge of other objects. The lotus feet of Sri Guru made me realize that it is my duty not to follow the blind.

I did not possess that judgment of worshipping the lotus feet of Sri Guru for many years. The service of Sri Guru is verily my only duty, the function of the principle of my individual self. This also I have been enabled to understand only by his grace. After obtaining the sight of the lotus feet of Sri Guru, I have no longer such judgment that I have any other function except serving the feet of Sri Guru.

By his mercy, that dearest servant of the Supreme Lord, in order to rescue me from the clutches of worldly vanity, made me cognizant of the service of the darling of Nanda. It was only at that moment that I could realize that there is no other function of the jiva's own self. There is no other blessing except the endeavor to please the senses of the darling of Nanda. He alone is both the only mode and the only goal of all my activities. Sri Guru is His most beloved.

The service to the lotus feet of Sri Guru cannot be performed by an unskilled person like me, by any of the instruments such as body, mind and speech. If Sri Guru infuses in me the power, or looks upon me with approval, then I can gain his favor, and I can then obtain the fitness for serving him.

I could understand the subject of the summum bonum only on the day Sri Guru placed his feet, which are obtainable with difficulty even by the gods, on the head of an unworthy person like myse lf and baptized me with their dust. I then submitted to them the auspicious wish that I might be a fit recipient of the potency that is wielded by them.

In my vanity I could not fancy that the lotus feet of Sri Guru could be really so great. But if I narrate to you the good fortune attained by them, this may be conducive to the worship of Sri Guru by yourselves also.

Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami has prayed, "I am most unworthy. I am more sinful than Jagai and Madhai; more insignificant than the maggot germinating in filth. The goodness of the person who even chances to hear my name, wears off. He who even utters my name reaps sin. Who is there in this world to have mercy on me, with the single exception of Sri Nityananda Prabhu?"*[See Endnote 1]

I have no resources to show my gratitude towards one who has acted the part of

the most merciful of all persons, for the purpose of conferring on such an unworthy person the gift of fi tness. It is not possible for me to repay his kindness in any way. Sri Guru is the counterpart of Godhead – possessing a singleness of purpose to serve Godhead. Every act of his is the highest ideal of the service of Godhead. As long as this vision suffers any impediment, the scales have not fallen from my eyes.

Unless we obtain the grace, unless we gain spiritual enlightenment, we cannot realize the greatness of his lotus feet. When I set myself to discourse regarding Sri Gurudeva, I find that he manifests himself in this world for the establishment of the heart's desire of Sri Caitanya, for rousing me into the waking state. Our previous acarya Thakura Narottama has revealed this: sri caitanya mano' bhistam stapitam yena bhutale / svayam rupah kada mahyam dadati sva-padantikam – "Oh, when will Sri Rupa himself, by whom the heart's desire of Sri Caitanya has been substantiated in this world, vouchsafe me the close proximity of his own feet?"

After I had the good fortune of obtaining the sight of the lotus feet of Sri Guru, I had the opportunity of discoursing about these words of the best of teachers, Thakura Narottama. The lotus feet of Sri Guru manifest in this world for establishing the heart's desire of Sri Caitanya.

What is the nature of the heart of Sri Caitanya? Sri Caitanyadeva had said, "The hearts of other persons are their minds. My mind is Vrndavana. I deem My mind and the divine woodland where Krsna loves to stroll as the same."

The holy Vrndavana is really the heart of Sri Gaurasundara. Only those who are saved from the clutches of evil can realize the nature of Sri Vrndavana. The word "abhista" in the verse of Thakura Narottama means literally "to desire in every way". He is referring to that which is desired by Caitanya in every way, that which Caitanya wills, and the teaching that He imparts for making the unconscious conscious. He prays, "When will Sri Rupa Gosvami Prabhupada, who has established this teaching of Caitanya in this world, place me in the close proximity of his lotus feet for the same service of the Lord?" The word "svayam rupa" may also mean "the personal form of the divinity, the darling of Nanda". In that case he prays, "When will Sri Krsnacandra, drawing my soul to His, take me to the proximity of His lotus feet?"

In Sri Krsna's personal form is concentrated the principles of real existence,

consciousness and bliss. With this bag of bone and muscle, this carcass of flesh and blood which has been born of parents for the purpose of suffering pain, for undergoing the threefold-misery in the prison of this world, for my aversion to Krsna – with this bundle of flesh and bones one cannot go to His presence.

Nor is it possible to approach the proximity of the feet of the personal divinity with the current of mental thought engrossed in external objects of sensuous perception, in which there is consciousness of any other object than the darling of Nanda. When the external objects of this world – house, body, air, fruits and flowers, this whole world – tell me, "Master, we wish to serve you," then I think, "Very well, let me be the lord of these."

The air-god is an object of my highest worship. Inhaling him with my nose and fancying him to be an object for ministering to my pleasure, I try to absorb him into my lungs. Why? In order to maintain my life, I have conceived the desire of becoming the lord pf my senses. I cannot understand that this eye is preventing me from seeing the unique and incomparable beauty of the darling of Nanda by holding external color and form; nor that the external sound is the obstacle of my catching the sound of Krsna's flute.

I am not able to find the strength to surmount this obstacle until Sri Guru, full of en dless mercy, manifests himself to me. I have been unable to feel any liking for the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya, the darling of Sri Nanda, and for the feet of Sri Rupa Gosvami – Sri Rupa Manjari – whose endeavors are fast bound to the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya. Alas! Indeed, where is another person whose fate is as blasted as mine?

Others work towards establishing the tidings of aversion to the darling of Nanda in this wicked world. But Sri Guru, the best beloved of Sri Caitanya, out of mercy, is trying to establish Sri Caitanya in my heart. When will the lotus feet of Sri Guru graciously allot me a place in their close proximity? When will Sri Guru make me enter the community of the followers of Rupa? When will the Vaisnavas, making me bathe in the shower of the dust of their feet, accept me as their servant? When shall I be able to behold that blessing, by bathing in the particles of feet-dust of the Vaisnavas – that blessing by which I shall b e able to obtain the mercy of that beauteous person Himself? Sri Baladeva Nityananda, who is the manifestation of Godhead's own Self, is Himself endeavoring to serve Krsna by cherishing that self conception.

There can be no service of Gaura if one is enveloped by the faculty of aversion. Sri Guru is that very person who, focusing in himself the manifestation of Krsna's own transcendental form, is engaged in establishing the heart's desire of Sri Caitanya in this world.

Sri Krsna, Brahma, Narada, Vyasa, Madhva, Padmanabha, Nrhari, Madhava, Aksobhya, Jayatirtha, Jnanasindhu, Dayanidhi, Vidyanidhi, Rajendra, Jayadharma, Purusottama, Vyasatirtha, Laksmipati, Madhavendra, Isvara, Advaita, Nityananda, Isvara's "disciple" Sri Caitanya – this is the successive order of preceptors. Sri Krsna has established the preceptorial order of this world. When will Krsna, drawing me into Himself, make me and object of His grace?

There is no func tion or object of endeavor for the individual soul, other than the service of Sri Radha-Govinda. I have observed this judgment and conduct only by the mercy of my Sri Guru. The worship of other gods, and so on, is also not the object of the endeavor of the individual soul.

The heart's desire of Sri Caitanya alone is also the limit of the desire of the individual soul. Words on any other subject are only a contrivance for the production of evil. This teaching also has been imparted by Sri Guru alone. Sri Guru is serving the darling son of Nanda at all times, by all senses, in every way. There is no other function of Sri Guru even for the space of a single moment, than such service. Unless we behold this, we do not really accept the protecting guidance of Sri Guru.

The darling son of Nanda, who is the sole object of worship by means of His centripetal attraction, has kept the attracted so effectively drawn towards Him that they do not experience any other desire. Such service is the only natural function of the soul. We, who are empowered by the limiting energy (maya), by the idea that we are not predominated parts of the divinity, are being engrossed by His deluding external power.

What endless variety of pretences have been put before us by the deluding energy in order to seduce us to the ambition of lording it over the material world, to impress on us that we have need of this connection with matter! The deluding energy has been appearing before us like a harlequin wearing a variety of masks.

We belong to the class of servants, as particles of the predominated energy of

Godhead. We are not the concentrated or plenary forms of the predominated power. We shall lapse into the worship of the form of the false ego if we cherish the offensive desire of masquerading as the holy concentrated forms of power, by giving up the inclination of serving Godhead by submission to the true concentrated personalities of power.

We are dis-associable particles. If we are not separable, how else can we learn to be averse to Sri Hari? These manifold misunderstandings have appeared in me by reason of my cherishing the idea that Sri Guru, the best beloved of the bestower of freedom from ignorance, has no relationship of kindred with me. I think that these misunderstandings are my enemies.

Those who help me towards the aptitude for service of Krsna are my only friends. Those who help me augment my aversion to Krsna are my most deadly enemies. Forgetting this judgment I become busy with activities for procuring vegetables, fish, fuel, and so on, for the maintenance and nourishment of those kindred of mine who are averse to Krsna. Forgetfulness of the service of the lotus feet of Sri Guru, the best beloved of the bestower of freedom from worldly bondage, is the cause of this.

Those who are comparatively less fortunate maintain that the worship of Sita-Rama is th e best of all. Those who are less fortunate than even these, regard the worship of Sri Sri Laksmi-Narayana and the fourfold enveloping expansions (vyuha) as the highest form of worship. Those wretched who are wholly devoid of any such thing as good fortune, get enveloped in abstract indefinite thinking and, ignoring even the unknowable existence of the spiritual, regard the dogma of the void as the highest of all. There are also a few who propound the hypothetical views of skepticism and agnosticism. In this manner one gets anxious to secede from the lotus feet of Sri Guru, in that proportion that his aversion to Krsna increases.

One welcomes as his guru that degree of aversion to Krsna which happens to characterize himself. By this process, the individual soul attains to diverse conditions ranging from that of contracted consciousness to that of a stone. Sri Guru is engaged in establishing the heart's desire of Sri Caitanya as soon as such misfortune overtakes us. I feel no hankering for the sight of the beauty of the lotus feet of Sri Guru who is so merciful. My thoughts wander away in all directions, in search of sensuous gratification, seeking how the belly may be well filled, how it may be possible to enjoy the world in an effective manner, how

bodily ailments may be cured, how physical health may be maintained, and so on, and so on.

The words of Sri Gaurasundara, those words that Sri Guru always repeats to us, declare that in the case of a person who does not want any personal advantage, who is inclined to serve Godhead, who is anxious to get across the ocean of the world to the further shore of the spiritual realm, for such a person to appreciate worldliness and women is, alas, more harmful than swallowing poison.

When Sri Guru bestows on us the mantra (which relieves one from the mental platform), in which he has been instructed by the Supreme Lord's own, it is only then that we realize the fact that th e service of the lotus feet of Sri Guru is the only cause of all well-being.

For the present I will serve Sri Guru starting from the commencement of every year to its close, throughout the whole of the year. I will serve him in future births. If, as the result of my service I attain the state of liberated life someday, I will serve the son of Sri Nanda by continuing to be the recipient of the lotus feet of Sri Guru.

Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami says in his supplication to Sri Radhika that he had indeed passed some time in a state of expectation which is replete with the ocean of bliss. If She will not give him Her mercy, what does he care about life or residence in Vraja, or about the slayer of Baka (Sri Krsna) Himself? Similarly, if I do not obtain the protecting support of Godhead appearing in the role of His servant, what will it avail me to live in Vraja or to attain Krsna? If the fortune of obtaining the sight of the best-beloved of Krsna is to be missed, I am prepared to give up my little life this day. Where is there any more use for preserving the inanimate body?

What manner of other duty may possibly exist for me that is making me run after it by giving up the service of the lotus feet of Sri Guru? Is the evil fortune of triple misery, which is afflicting the innumerable individual souls of the world, ever acceptable to me? No sooner does vulgar talk come to prevail then it produces addiction to this world as a result. Sri Guru tells of the holy name, then he tells of the divine form as worldly desire begins to subside, of the quality of the divinity on further diminution of such appetite, and he draws us fully to the lotus feet of Sri Krsna by telling us of His activities (lila) and the distinctive nature of individual service when the aptitude for worldliness is still further

attenuated. After that we serve the son of Nanda, the highest personality of divine activities, by entering into His pastime.

Is this service obtainable by the physical body derived from parents, by the second birth by means of gayatri, by admitting to the study of the scriptures or by subsisting on my mental function?

It is from Sri Guru alone that this function may be gained. His lotus feet are eternal. May I never undergo an interruption of relationship with his lotus feet, even for a single moment. May I be never loosened, even for a moment, from the bond that unites me to his lotus feet. May I never for a moment quit my hold of his lotus feet by being tempted by any fascination of this world. May I never be deprived of His lotus feet by listening to the advice of any other, worthless person.

The succession of preceptors commencing from Sri Krsna – Brahma, Narada, and all of them – are my Sri Gurudeva. My Gurudeva designates his preceptor as his Gurudeva. All of them are preceptors of the same chain. There is no difference in them. There is no diff erence in their utterances. The good fortune that I have gained by obtaining the sight of om visnupada Sri Sri Gaurakisora Prabhu, my mahanta Gurudeva*[See Endnote 2], I find no language to express. I have observed in him the renunciation of Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami in all its perfection. If there be a millionth part of his renunciation in any person, such a person is blessed, indeed; he is most highly blessed. He will be in a position to serve Krsna in the spirit of familiar confidence by climbing upon Krsna's bosom and shoulders.

It is my eternal function to serve the lotus feet of Sri Guru at all times and by means of all the senses. A great day of rejoicing for me has arrived inasmuch as those belonging to the disciplic line of om visnupada Sri Srila Jagannatha dasa Babaji Maharaja have come here to bless me. This high fortune has not been mine before now. All of you belong to the order of my Gurus. I have wasted your priceless time, devoted to the servi ce of Krsna, by speaking a number of incoherent words, but I have said these words only for worshipping Sri Gurudeva.

Sri Gaurasundara says, "Krsna is Master. He is the autocrat. He is full of activity by His will. All glory, above all things, to His self-willed activities. May He accept my service or reject it as He wishes. I will be prepared to offer Him my

exclusive service without guile, at all time and in every way, with body, mind and speech. If He spurns me with His feet I shall know that it is my want of worth."

May the ephemeral world not deflect me for a moment, never make me averse to the lotus feet of my Sri Guru. May Sri Gurudeva be pleased to accept my service. May I never have to associate with evil-minded persons.

I do not know what part of my attempt to worship Sri Gurudeva may be accepted by him, but it fills me with hope that He is more merciful to the undeserving. Holding fast to the hope of his causeless merc y, I will be all the more eager to serve. All of you belong to the line of my Guru. May you have mercy on me that I may be enabled to serve him. I offer my prostrated obeisances at your feet.

ENDNOTE 1:

jagai madhai haite muni se papistha
purisera kita haite muni se laghistha
mora nama sune yei, tara punya ksaya
mora nama laya yei, tara papa haya
emana nigrna more keba krpa kare
eka nityananda vinu jagat bhitare

["I am more sinful than Jagai and Madhai and even lower than the worms in the stool. Anyone who hears my name loses the results of his pious activities. Anyone who utters my name becomes sinful. Who in this world but Nityananda could show His mercy to such an abominable person as me?"
(Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami - Caitanya-caritamrta, Adi-lila 5.205-207)]

ENDNOTE 2:
There are two kinds of siksa-guru: caitya guru (the Supersoul) and mahanta guru.

siksa-guruke ta' jani krsnera svarupa
antaryami, bhakta-srestha,--ei dui rupa

["One should know the instructing spiritual master to be the Personality of Krsna. Lord Krsna manifests Himself as the Supersoul and as the greatest devotee of the Lord."

(Caitanya-caritamrta, Adi-lila 1.47)]

Srila Bhakti Dayita Madhava Goswami Maharaj

"All service to your Gurudeva is hundred percent yours. You are to be grateful to whosoever is helping you in that," this was Srila Prabhupad Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur's instruction to one of his most favourite disciples, His Divine Grace Om Vishnupad Ashtottrashat Sri Srimat Bhakti Dayita Madhav Goswami Maharaj (Srila Gurudeva), who appeared in this world on November 18, 1904 A.D. (on Utthan-Ekadashi tithi) at Kanchanpara dham (District Faridpur, now in Bangladesh).

As the pastime of the Awakening of the All-Merciful, All-Good, All-Blissful Supreme Lord, Sri Hari, on Utthan Ekadasi Tithi (Utthan awakening) is for the eternal good of all the living beings of the world, the pastime of the Advent-Awakening of His Personal Associate, His Absolute Counterpart Gurudev (Madhav Goswami Maharaj), on Utthan Ekadasi Tithi is also for the eternal benefit of all. Param Pujyapad Most Revered Srimad Bhakti Pramode Puri Goswami Maharaj used to comment, "It is profoundly significant that the Advent Day of Srimad Bhakti Dayita Madhav Goswami Maharaj falls on the Disappearance day of Srimad Gaur Kishore Das Babaji Maharaj on Utthan Ekadasi Tithi and His Disappearance Day falls on the Disappearance day of Vaishnav-Sarvabhauma Srimad Jagannath Das Babaji Maharaj on Sukla Pratipad Tithi (the first lunar day of pight fortnight)."

The Holy Birthplace of Srimad Madhav Goswami Maharaj is situated at the bank of the Padma River, which is near Premtoli where Srila Narottama Thakur experienced ecstatic feelings of Divine Love while bathing as per the direction given by Srimad Nityananda Prabhu in a dream. Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu kept Divine Love in the custody of Padmavati Devi (the Presiding Deity of the Padma River) to offer it to Narottama Thakur when he would come there to take bath.

Revered Bhakti Dayita Madhav Maharaj was born of a high caste brahmin

family. His Grandfather, Sri Chandi Prasad Deva Sarma Bandyopadhyaya, was a well-reputed prominent person of Vikrampur, Dacca (Bangladesh). His father's name was Sri Nishikanta Deva Sarma Bandyopadhyaya; His mother's name was Srimati Saibalini Devi. His mother was of a highly dignified, sober temperament, a wise woman endowed with many good qualities, and as such, an object of reverence to all. His father passed away in His childhood. His parents named Him Sri Heramba Bandyopadhyaya. His pet name was Ganesh.

Extraordinary saintly qualities were manifested in Him from boyhood. He was adored by all and was a universally accepted leader in every sphere. He strictly observed ethical rules and celibacy (pahmacharya) and taught others to observe celibacy and moral rules. His guardians and teachers were astonished to hear profound words of wisdom from the boy. At the age of eleven years, He memorized the complete Gita, merely by hearing it from his mother. He practiced severe penance by taking only boiled food once in a day in his home at Calcutta. At that time while He was invoking Sri Krishna for His Grace and was weeping severely in the grief of separation from Krishna, He was blessed by seeing Sri Narada Goswami in a dream and received Mantra from Him. However, He could not remember the Mantra completely after waking from the dream. He became disappointed, and out of persistent solicitousness, left the house and went to the Himalayan Mountains beyond Haridwar where He stayed at a stretch without food for three days, continuously wailing and praying for the Grace of Sri Krishna. At last, He heard a prophetic, divine message directing Him, "Go back to your place. Don't be disheartened. Your Gurudev has appeared there-- take absolute shelter of His Lotus Feet." He then came down from the mountains, remained for sometime at Haridwar and later returned to Calcutta.

He went with friends to Sri Mayapur, the Holy Birth-Place of Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, and met His Gurudeva, His Divine Grace Srimad Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada at Sri Chaitanya Math in the year 1925 AD. He was attracted to Him upon seeing His Divine Spiritual Personality. Taking absolute shelter at His Lotus Feet, He took initiation from Him at Sri Gaudiya Math, at 1, Ultadanga Junction Road, Calcutta on November 1, 1927 AD. He joined the Sri Gaudiya Math Institution immediately after taking initiation and also made His devout vow of celibacy, even though young of age. Within a very short time, He was regarded as one of the favorite disciples among the entourage of Srimad Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada. This was due to His devout devotion to Guru, His competence in rendering all kinds of service, and His untiring enthusiasm and diligence to serve Vishnu and the Vaishnavas.

Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada, seeing His undaunted spirit to contribute to the objective of the Institution by way of practicing and propagating the Gospel of Divine Love of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, used to commend Him by saying, "His energy is volcanic energy". Srimad Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada never hesitated to send Him to perform any important task or to send Him out as an advance party because He was confident and sure that the task at hand would be successfully completed in due course. He actively helped in organising preaching festivals as well as Parikramas of Vraja and Navadwip Dham, establishing preaching centres and the Maths, spreading the message of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in the cities and villages. He also established shrines of Mahaprabhu's Lotus feet (Pada-pithas) in many of the places the Lord had visited, restored other holy sites, published transcendental books and magazines in order to spread the message of pure devotion. Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada had so much confidence in Srimad Hayagriva Das Brahmachari (Madhav Goswami Maharaj), that He first selected Him to be sent to foreign countries for preaching, for which purpose His Passport and all necessities were ready. But Rajarshi Sri Saradindu Narayan Ray, one important household devotee, objected to this proposal saying that Sri Hayagriva Das pahmachari was young and very beautiful, "There may be difficulty in sending such a beautiful, young pahmachari to foreign countries. Instead an old Sannyasi should be sent there." At his suggestion, Param Pujyapad Srimad Bhakti Pradeep Tirtha Maharaj was sent instead. Srimad Hayagriva Das Brahmachari resembled His Divine Grace Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada in appearance so much, that many outside people wrongly thought Him to be the son of Srimad Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami.

Srimad Madhav Maharaj took Tridanda Sannyas at the age of forty from his God-brother, His Divine Grace Srimad Bhakti Gourav Vaikhanas Maharaj (a Sannyas disciple of Srila Prabhupada Bhakti Siddhanta), at Sri Tota-Gopinath Temple, Purushottam Dham on Gaura-purnima in the year 1944. He became renowned in the Gaudiya Math as His Divine Grace Parivrajaka Acharya Tridandi Swami Srimad Bhakti Dayita Madhav Goswami Maharaj. As per the direct instruction of His Divine Grace Srimad Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada, His Divine Grace Madhav Goswami Maharaj started His preaching in Assam and established three Maths at: [1] Tezpur, [2] Guwahati and [3] Goalpara. He also managed the seva-puja of Sorbhog Sri Gaudiya Math (in Assam), founded by Srimad Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur.

'Hyutkale Purushottamat' - Sri Krishna Bhakti will spread from Sri Purushottam Dham in Orissa - predicted Sri Vyasdev in Padma-Purana. This prophecy was fulfilled after the appearance of Srila Prabhupada in the house of Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode in Puri. Srila Gurudeva recovered this most munificent place of the appearance of Srila Prabhupad Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur after great effort for which he is justly renowned.

'A gigantic spiritual personality', Srila Gurudeva pierced the fortress of impersonalist philosophy in Punjab, where he was first to introduce the Divine Love of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Tenth in the preceptorial line from Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Srila Gurudeva founded Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Math organisation Institution in 1953 and established many large preaching centers. He wandered from village to village, travelling by foot and sometimes by oxcart, simply to bring the greatest good to every living being to turn them toward Krishna.

He also took over the service of the 500 years old temples of Lord Jagannath at Jasra, Chakdah and at Agartala, Tripura. He established Sri Chaitanya Vani Press in Calcutta. He preached extensively in different parts of India spreading the divine message of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu irrespective of caste, colour or creed.

Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Maharaj

In the early years of this century, Srila Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakura set into motion a devotional revival that rapidly spread through Bengal, India, and eventually the world. He put into question the very foundations of present-day theistic thought in a way that has little comparison anywhere in the spiritual record, East or West. Through him, the world was awakened to the teachings of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and the movement of pure devotion, suddha bhakti.

In orchestrating this modern bhakti revolution, Srila Prabhupada gathered some of the greatest spiritual luminaries in contemporary history into his circle. Such a convergence of exalted spiritual personalities can only be compared to the coming together of Sri Chaitanya's direct followers in the sixteenth century. One of the devotional giants who entered Srila Prabhupada's orbit was His Divine Grace Bhakti Promode Puri Goswami Maharaja.

We cannot describe the life of Srila Puri Goswami Maharaja without emphasizing his contribution to the spiritual movement in which he was so integrally involved. The depth of his accomplishments cannot be fathomed outside the context of Sri Gaudiya Math. With his fellow godbrothers, he shared an indomitable faith in the service of his Guru and the message of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. This service was the sole purpose and highest aspiration of his being. This conviction led him to spend his entire life in the pursuit of Srila Prabhupada and Mahaprabhu's pleasure and the fulfillment of their desires. If we examine his life in this setting, we will see more than just numbers, dates, places and names. We will see how he embodied the very life current that his spiritual preceptors came to give the world.

Srila Puri Goswami Maharaja took birth in the village of Ganganandapur in Jessore district (in present-day Bangla Desh), on October 8, 1898. His parents, Tarini Charan Chakravarti and Srimati Ram Rangini Devi, named him Sri Promode Bhushan Chakravarti. During his childhood, he met his vartma-pradarsaka guru ("one who opens the door to the path of devotion"), Srila Bhakti Ratna Thakura, a godbrother and siksha disciple of Thakura Bhaktivinoda, the legendary architect of the present Gaudiya Vaishnava movement. Through Bhakti Ratna Thakura he was introduced to Sajjana-tosani, Bhaktivinoda Thakura's own Vaishnava periodical, which was filled with Bhaktivinoda's commentaries and holy teachings. In this way Srila Puri Maharaja became familiar with the seminal works of the suddha bhakti tradition, such as Chaitanya Charitamrita, Chaitanya Bhagavata and the Srimad Bhagavatam. It was also through Bhakti Ratna Thakura that he first learned of his future guru, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada.

Srila Puri Maharaja was still a young university student when he first came before Srila Prabhupada at the Yoga Pith in Sri Mayapur in 1915. It was a significant occasion, for Srila Prabhupada's diksha guru, Paramahamsa Thakura Srimad Gaura Kishor Das Babaji, had entered his eternal abode only the day

before. Srila Puri Maharaja often recounted that as soon as he saw Srila Prabhupada and paid his obeisances to him for the first time, he knew in his heart that this was his spiritual master. Some years later, on the auspicious day of Sri Krishna Janmastami in 1923, he accepted both Harinam and mantra diksha from Srila Prabhupada and was given the name Pranavananda Brahmachari.

At the time, Sri Gaudiya Math was rapidly establishing itself as a bona fide manifestation of Indian religious culture and transforming the caste-conscious socio-religious world of Hinduism. Srila Prabhupada Saraswati Thakura was bringing together his intimate associates to share the wealth of Sri Krishna sankirtana. He had accepted tridandi sannyasa in 1918 and by the early 1920's had already assumed a formidable position in the Bengali spiritual firmament. He was fearless when it came to upholding true religious principles. The students and practitioners of the Gaudiya Math aligned themselves with this attitude and led most exemplary lives of devotion, imbued with austerity, discipline and in-depth scriptural learning. This high standard of religious life was the hallmark of Sri Gaudiya Math and would be the thread that guided all of Srila Prabhupada's disciples, including Srimad Puri Goswami Maharaja.

The keystone of success in devotion is to perfectly hear the holy words spoken by one's spiritual preceptor. Srila Prabhupada would often say, "All that is required of you is that you lend me your ears." Srila Puri Maharaja was fully committed to this maxim. He had the great good fortune to associate closely with Srila Prabhupada for thirteen years and during that time he served him personally by recording his lectures and conversations, which were later published. The greater part of Srila Prabhupada's spoken words we are left with today come from the transcriptions of these notes. At the same time, Srila Puri Maharaja cultivated a deep knowledge of the Vaishnava scriptures, with the result that he became a veritable storehouse of the wealth of the preceptorial line coming from Sri Chaitanya and his followers. This led him to become one of the most prolific writers and influential teachers in all of Gaudiya Vaishnava history. His writings reflect the disciplined eye of a scholar who expresses with grace and directness the purest scriptural conclusions supported by his own uncommonly profound realization.

Following Srila Prabhupada's directives, our Gurudeva edited, wrote for, published and helped distribute countless spiritual publications. He was initially inspired and directed by Srila Prabhupada to start writing and contributing articles to the Gaudiya magazine, the backbone of the Gaudiya Math's

missionary work. For seven years he served as a proofreader and as one of its primary editors. In 1926, he was charged with running the world’s only daily Vaishnava newspaper, Dainika Nadiya Prakasa. He held this service for two years, publishing all of his preceptor’s daily discourses along with articles by fellow students and other contemporaries. His service and learning did not pass unnoticed by Srila Prabhupada who awarded him the titles of maha-mahopadesaka (“great instructor”) and pratna-vidyalankara (“keeper of the wisdom of the ancient scriptural lore”).

After the disappearance of his Gurudeva in 1937, Srila Puri Maharaja continued his vocation of spreading the teachings of Sri Chaitanya through the Gaudiya magazine, first out of the Bagh Bazaar Gaudiya Math and then later the Sri Chaitanya Math in Mayapur. After he founded the Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, Srila Puri Goswami Maharaja’s godbrother, Srimad Bhakti Dayita Madhava Maharaja, invited him to head the editorial board of Chaitanya Vani magazine in 1964. Puri Maharaja served in this capacity for thirty-three years, furthering his life’s work of preserving the teachings of his spiritual lineage. Through Chaitanya Vani, he continued to make a deep impact on the devotional world.

In all, our venerable teacher’s wisdom is embodied in over sixty years of writings on Vaishnava philosophy and theology. He penned a rich variety of texts, bringing the Bhagavata dharma to life through hundreds of poems, essays, narratives, diaries, editorials and personal letters, thus creating a storehouse of the wealth of pure devotion for his disciples and the world at large.

In 1942, Srila Prabhupada appeared to Srila Puri Maharaja in a dream vision and imparted to him the sannyasa mantra, ordering him to accept the renounced order. After accepting tridandi-sannyasa from his godbrother Bhakti Gaurava Vaikhanasa Maharaja in Champahati in August of 1946, he toured parts of India with other godbrothers such as Bhakti Hridoy Bon Maharaja and Bhakti Dayita Madhava Maharaja. In the meantime, he continued to write and lecture with dedication. At the behest of his godbrother Tridandi Swami Bhakti Vilasa Tirtha Maharaja, he also served for seven years as chief pujari for the Yoga Pitha temple, the birthsite of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Srila Puri Maharaja took up a more solitary life of worship in the 1950’s. He moved to a humble cottage on the banks of the Ganges in Ambika Kalna. The king of Burdwan was extremely impressed by his saintly ascetic character and, on the appearance day of Srimati Radharani in 1958, presented him with the

ancient Ananta Vasudeva temple in Kalna.

In 1989, at the age of 91, Srila Puri Goswami Maharaja established the Sri Gopinatha Gaudiya Math in Ishodyan, Sri Mayapur, for the service of their divine lordships, Sri Sri Gaura-Gadadhara, Jagannatha Deva, Radha-Gopinatha and Lakshmi-Narasingha Deva. In the following years, he established other temples in Jagannatha Puri, Vrindavana, Calcutta and Midnapore.

Srila Puri Maharaja taught through his every action. He excelled in all aspects of devotional practice and there was perhaps no area in which he did not exhibit utmost expertise, diligence and foresight. This ranged from his encyclopedic knowledge of scripture, to maintaining the printing press, to his beautiful singing of kirtan. He was especially recognized for his sensitivity and attention to detail in the performance of deity worship and devotional rites and was thus widely called upon to be the head priest in most of the Gaudiya Matha's deity installations and ceremonial functions. He was rarely known to rest; his service was an uninterrupted flow. Even in his later years, he would remain awake, writing and chanting through the night while all his youthful disciples were still asleep. When his personal servants came in the morning, they would inevitably find him awake and chanting the Holy Name, arisen before everyone else in the ashrama.

Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Maharaja had outstanding love for his godbrothers and was inspired in his glorification of others. He found richness in everyone he met. He had the quality of making one feel so much wanted and their life so much valued. At the same time, he paid the least attention to himself. He was an emblem of humility and simplicity, and his generosity of spirit and kindness touched the hearts of the whole Vaishnava community. Among his lifetime, intimate companions were Srila Bhakti Rakshaka Sridhara Deva Goswami Maharaja, Srila Bhakti Prajnan Keshava Maharaja, and Srila Akinchan Krishna Das Babaji Maharaja. Toward the end of his sojourn in this world, he was honored by the Gaudiya Vaishnava community for his learning, long life of service and devotion and made president of the World Vaishnava Association in 1995.

"He has love for his Guru; and let it be known that his life is one with his words." This tribute, coming from Srila Prabhupada himself, is the most revealing statement about Srila Puri Goswami Maharaja's personality and qualities. He gave credit for all of his accomplishments to the mercy of his

Gurudeva alone. Through the blessings of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakura, Srila Bhakti Promode Puri Maharaja attracted the hearts of so many to the Bhagavata religion. People from so many different backgrounds and countries found in him a true spiritual guide and shelter. He upheld the principles of pure Vaishnavism and delineated the path of saranagati. He so embodied pure devotion and service to his spiritual master that one of his disciples once remarked that he was able to “silently lay down Srila Prabhupada’s entire siddhanta.”

We are greatly indebted to His Divine Grace for his gift–a lifetime of pure devotion, spanning over a century, which we can aspire for, learn from, and discuss about for our own spiritual nourishment. Srila Puri Maharaja departed this world for the eternal abode in the predawn hours of Narayana Chaturdasi, October 21, 1999, one day before the Rasa Purnima. His divine body was transported from Jagannatha Puri to the Gopinatha Gaudiya Matha in Ishodyan and there placed in his eternal samadhi shrine. Prior to his departure from this world, Srila Puri Goswami Maharaja appointed his intimate disciple, Sripada Bhakti Bibudha Bodhayan Maharaja as his successor and President-acharya of Sri Gopinatha Gaudiya Matha.

In years to come as more of his words and vision are translated, the world outside of Bengal and India will come to know the spirit of the true Vaishnava religion that he tirelessly shared. May the gentle rain of nectar of his perfect teachings continue to bring auspiciousness into this world.

source: www.bvml.org

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura

namo bhaktivinodaya saccidananda-murtaye
gaura-shakti-svarupaya rupanuga-varaya te

I offer my obeisances to you, O Bhaktivinoda, the form of eternity, knowledge and bliss, the incarnation of Gaura's potency and the best of the followers of Rupa Goswami.
Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur's transcendental identity is revealed to the members of his spiritual family. He is the best of the followers of Rupa Manjari who is the leader of Lalita Sakhi's entourage. Lalita Sakhi is the foremost of Radharani's eight girlfriends. In various places in his own writings, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur has indicated this divine identity:

yugala-sevaya, shri-rasa-mandale, niyukta kara amay
lalita-sakhira, ayogya-kinkari, vinoda dhariche pay

Bhaktivinoda holds your feet and asks you to engage this unworthy servant of Lalita Sakhi in the service of the Divine Couple while they are performing the rasa-lila.
(Kalyana-kalpataru)

In the song Siddhi-lalasa in his Gita-mala, also, Bhaktivinoda Thakur gives his eternal spiritual identity as Kamala Manjari, the servant of Sri Rupa Manjari. Her kunja is in the bower of Lalita, Vrajananda-sukhada-kuïja, where she sets the standard of worship to the Divine Couple.

varane tariit, vasa taravali, kamala-manjari nama
sarie baro varsha, vayas satata, svananda-sukhada dhama

My bodily hue is like that of lightning and I wear a sari the colour of a clear night sky sprinkled with stars. I am twelve and a half years old and I live in Svananda-sukhada-kunja.

The need for Bhaktivinoda's appearance

After the disappearance of Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Svarupa Damodar, Ramananda Raya and the Six Goswamis, Srinivas Acharya, Narottama Das and Shyamananda Prabhu, a dark age descended on the world of Gaudiya Vaishnavism. Those unable to understand the transcendental purity of Mahaprabhu's religion of love started numerous heretical sects or apasampradayas. Totarama Das Babaji named thirteen such heretical sects:

aul, baul, kartabhaja, neria, daravesha, sain
sahajiya, sakhibheki, smarta, jata-gosaïi
atibarii, curiadhari, gauranga-nagari
tota kahe ei teror sanga nahi kari

Educated upper class Bengali society was shocked and disgusted by the practices of these heretical sects and came to identify Mahaprabhu's religion with the lower classes, the uneducated and immoral. People of the gentle classes thus had no understanding or faith in Mahaprabhu's true religion. The most munificent incarnation Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu took pity on these bewildered persons and in order to reclaim them for his path of divine love sent his eternal associate Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur into this world. Possessed of superhuman prowess, the Thakur wrote more than a hundred books in several different languages with the goal of defeating all the unorthodox views opposed to the true doctrines of Mahaprabhu's religion. The result was that many members of discerning society and others from all over the world came to recognize the unequalled value of Mahaprabhu's teachings. The founder of the Chaitanya Math and the worldwide Gaudiya Maths, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur, based his mission on the books and teachings given by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur and set into motion the fulfillment of Mahaprabhu's message, found in the Chaitanya Bhagavat:

prithivite paryanta ache jata desha-grama
sarvatra saïcara haibeka mora nama

My name will pervade every village and country in the world. (Chaitanya Bhagavat 3.4.126)
Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur thus made an unequalled contribution to the ultimate, spiritual welfare of humankind. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur wrote in his preface to the Jaiva-dharma: “Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur is an extremely dear associate of Sri Chaitanya Candra. In the course of time, when those who preached the desires of Chaitanya Deva had left this world to enter the Lord's eternal pastimes, the sky over Bengal slowly darkened, covered by the thick clouds of sensual enjoyment and false renunciation. The sky was covered and the world was bereft of the rays of light coming from the sankirtan propagated by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. One by one, the sun, the moon and the unlimited stars of that sky faded from view, leaving only the occasional flash of lightning to disrupt the unending darkness of ignorance. Almost 350 years after the appearance of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur came

to illuminate the Gaudiya sky.

All the great virtues are present in the body of a Vaishnava. The good qualities of Krishna gradually develop in his devotees. All these transcendental qualities are the characteristics of pure Vaishnavas, and they cannot be fully explained, but I shall try to point out some of the most important. Devotees are always merciful; they are not bellicose. They are truthful, equal to all, faultless, generous, mild and clean. They are without material possessions, and they work for the welfare of all. They are peaceful, surrendered to Krishna and desireless. They are meek, resolute, and completely control the six character flaws of lust, anger, greed and so forth. They eat only as much as required and are prudent, respectful, and free from false prestige. They are grave, sympathetic, friendly, poetic, expert and silent.
(Chaitanya-caritamrita 2.22.75-80)

“All these devotee qualities were perfectly displayed by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur throughout his life of pure devotion. The ocean of compassion, Sri Gaurahari, displayed this merciful nature to the conditioned souls in nine different ways. The same kind of distribution of mercy is seen in the life and work of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur.”

The Sampradaya’s debt to Bhaktivinoda Thakur

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur is the root of the daily activities in the Chaitanya Math, the Gaudiya Math, the Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, the Gaudiya Missions, etc. The Gaudiya Math institutions cannot be separated from Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur. These institutions are entirely indebted to his sublime contributions.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur has written, “Devotees in the line of Srila Rupa Goswami do not preach faith in their own powers, but rather direct attention to the source of their spiritual strength. We also do everything for the sake of Sri Krishna Chaitanya, Sri Rupa, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur and our divine spiritual master.”
(From Patravali, Srila Prabhupada’s letters, vol. 3, p. 89.)

Devotees of the Brahma-Madhva-Sarasvata-Gaudiya sampradaya pay their respects daily to Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur as follows:

shuddha-bhakti-pracarasya mulibhuta ihottamah
shri-bhaktivinodo devas tat-priyatvena vishrutah

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur is a transcendental personality who is the root of the preaching movement of pure devotion. He is renowned as one who is dear to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Hymns to Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur

Two of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur's most prominent disciples, His Grace Bhaktirakshaka Shridhara Deva Goswami and His Grace Bhaktivicara Yayabara Maharaj wrote hymns in praise of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur, the former in Sanskrit, the latter in Bengali. These have been given below:

vande bhaktivinodam shri-gaurashakti-Svarupakam
bhakti-shastra-jïa-samrajam radha-rasa-sudhanidhim

I bow to Sri Thakur Bhaktivinoda, Mahaprabhu's divine energies personified. He is the emperor of Vaishnava scholars and possesses the ambrosial treasure of Sri Radha's sacred rapture.

Bhakativinoda prabhu, daya koro more
tava kripa bale pai shri-prabhupadere
bhakati-siddhanta sarasvati prabhupada
jagate aniya dile kariya prasada
sarasvati krishna-priya, krishna-bhakti tanra hiya
vinodera sei se vaibhava
ei gitera bhavartha, prabhupada para-artha
ebe mora kari anubhava

O Bhaktivinoda Prabhu, be merciful to me, for by your blessings I can attain Srila Prabhupada, Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati. Out of compassion for the world, you brought him whose heart is filled with devotion to Krishna and who is dear to Krishna. This is the glory of Bhaktivinoda Thakur. The purpose of this song is to find complete dedication to Srila Prabhupada and this is what we now experience.

shri-caitanya-janma-sthana shri-mayapura

tomara pracare ebe janila samsara
shikshamrita, jaiva-dharma, adi grantha shata
sajjana-toshani-patri sarva-samadrita
ei saba grantha-patri kariya pracara
lupta-praya shuddha-bhakti karile uddhara
jivere janale tumi hao krishna-dasa
krishna bhajo krishna cinto charii anya asha
krishna-dasye jiva saba parananda pay
sakala vipad ha'te mukta haye jay

The whole world has learned that Chaitanya's birthplace is in Mayapur thanks to your preaching efforts. Your hundred books such as Sri-Chaitanya-Shikshamrita, Jaiva Dharma, etc., and your magazine, Sajjana-toshani are valued by all. You preached these books and magazines and by so doing were able to restore the religion of pure devotion which had almost been lost. You told the fallen souls that they were in truth servants of Krishna and you told them to worship Krishna, to think of Krishna and to give up all other ambition. Through service to Krishna, the living being finds full happiness in life and freedom from all danger.

apani acari dharma shikhale sabare
grihe kimba dhame thaki bhajaha krishnere
gadadhara-gaurahari-seva prakashile
shri-radha-madhava-rupe tandera dekhile
gosvami-ganera grantha vicara kariya
susiddhanta shikhayeche pramanadi diya
taha parii shuni loka akrishta haila
jaga-bhari tava nama gahite lagila
vyasera abhinna tumi purana prakasha
shuk_bhinna prabhupada shri-dayita-dasa

You taught everyone by your own example that they should worship Krishna whether they are living as a householder or residing in the dham. You consecrated deities of Gadadhara-Gauranga, seeing Radha and Madhava in them. You studied the scriptures of the Goswamis and preached the pure doctrines that you found there with the appropriate evidence. Those who heard and read these doctrines were attracted and began to sing your glories throughout the world. You are like Vyasadeva who published the Puranas, and Srila Prabhupada, Dayita Das, your son, is like Sukadeva.

vaishnavera jata guna achaye granthete
sakala prakasha haila tomara dehete
shri-gaura-mandala majhe shri-biranagar
tava avirbhava sthana sarva-shubhankara
vandi ami nata-shire sei punya-kshetra
mastake dharana kari se dhuli pavitra
tomara kripaya ishodyane sthana pai
bhagavata-mathe basi tava nama gai
tomara dasanudasa yati yayabara
prarthana karaye dhama-vasa nirantara

All the Vaishnava qualities described in the books are manifest in your body. You appeared in Gaura-mandala-bhumi, in the village of Birnagar, a place which is auspicious for all. I worship that holy spot with my head bowed low, taking its holy dust on my head. By your mercy, I have found a place in Ishodyan, the divine garden of Mayapur, and here in the Bhagavata Math, I glorify your name. The servant of your servants, the sannyasi Yayabara, prays to you to grant him eternal life in the Holy Dhama.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur’s family history

Just as the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna’s highest perfection is in his human activities in a human form, so similarly his eternal associates also act in human-like ways when they descend to the worldly platform for the benefit of the fallen living entities. Even though they appear to be ordinary human beings, they are in fact never touched by the illusory nature and always remain transcendental to it. They may be situated in householder life, but they are never entangled in material sensual desires like an ordinary conditioned soul because of their deep attachment and love for the Lord. They are simply engaged in a pastime whereby they imitate the activities of the rest of mankind for the sake of exchanging with them for the purposes of benefitting them. Those who have surrendered with sincerity to Vishnu and the Vaishnavas are able to recognize the non-material character of these personalities.

The King Adishura invited Brahmins and other upper class Hindus to Bengal, amongst whom was the kayastha Purushottam. His seventh and eighth generation descendants were Sri Vinayaka and Narayan who became government ministers. The fifteenth generation descendant was Mahaprabhu’s contemporary, Raja Krishnananda Datta. He was a devotee of Krishna and

Nityananda Prabhu came to stay in his home with his entourage and bestowed profuse blessings on him. Descendents of Krishnananda Datta include Govindasharana Datta who founded the village of Govindapura. Kalighata, Sutanuti and Govindapura are the three villages which later became Calcutta.

Govindasharana Datta's grandson was Ramachandra. His grandson was Madana Mohana Datta, who donated Calcutta's Heduwa Pukur to the municipality for public use. He also spent a great deal of his personal wealth in 1774 to build steps at Gaya's Pretashila Tirtha and the Candranatha mountain. Madana Mohana Datta's grandson was Rajavallabha Datta, whose son Anandacandra Datta was very religious and detached from material life. Anandacandra married Jaganmohini Devi, the daughter of the celebrated zamindar of Ula village in Nadia district, Ishvaracandra Mustaufi.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur accepted Anandacandra Datta and Jaganmohini Devi as his parents and appeared in Ula-Birnagar in the home of his maternal grandfather. It was the 352nd year after the birth of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Sunday, Sept. 2, 1838; the tithi was Shukla Trayodashi of Bhadra. His parents gave him the name Kedaranatha.

Bhaktivinoda Thakur's childhood

Bhaktivinoda composed his first poem when he was only two years old. This extraordinary display of talent gave an indication of his future vocation and the transcendental devotional songs he would write later in his life. Songs full of devotion for the Lord and sacred sentiment like his are not the result of any worldly scholarship or creativity, but are self-manifested in the eternally perfect associate of the Lord. The words of the residents of Vaikuntha are all not different from the object of their speech, the Supreme Lord. They can in no way be compared to any mundane sound vibration. Every word used by the Thakur is divine ambrosia which awakens the mood of love for the Lord and is full of the flavors of devotional sentiment.
At only six, had learned all the details of the historical epics, Mahabharata and Ramayana. Is an ordinary six-year old capable of such a feat? Without divine mercy, it is impossible to understand the basis of all the devotional scriptures. They are not accessible to mere scholarship. The meaning of the scriptures was revealed in the heart of the Thakur on its own. Thus, there is a basic difference

between the explanations of scripture given by him and those derived from a mundane scholarly analysis.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur began researching astrological texts when he was nine years old, but according to his autobiography, he began inquiring into spiritual truth at the age of ten. Though he was naturally fixed in spiritual truth at every moment, he displayed this pastimes in order to demonstrate the special character of human life. He began to mix with people in order to find out what preoccupied people and what they thought about. With his sweet words and respectful attitude, he won over all those whom he encountered. Whenever he pointed out the flaws of anyone's argument, they would not feel angry or disappointed but rather joy. This was not within the capacity of an ordinary restless boy of ten years.

The following is Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur's account of several childhood events from his autobiography: "I would go whenever a festival was held at someone's house. There were often such religious festivals at the Brahmachari's house. There was a nice temple on the outside, and inside a flower garden and a fire-sacrifice altar. The Brahmachari worshiped according to the Tantrik cult. He kept a human skull in a small, hidden room. Some people said that if you gave water and milk to a human skull, it will smile. I took the skull down and gave it water, but I saw no smile.

"Nearby there was also an astrologer's house where I would listen to singing performances. One old carpenter was engaged to paint backdrops for the image during the Durga puja. I sat near him while he worked and asked him many questions, which he always answered. I asked, 'When does the spirit of the god enter into the image?' The carpenter answered, 'When I paint its eyes, the god will come and take up residence in the image.' The day that he was actually going to paint the deity's eyes, I eagerly came but I never saw the god actually appear. I said, 'Goloka Pal made this image. He first tied bundles of straw and then covered it with clay. You covered it with chalk and then painted it. There is no god anywhere in this statue at all, is there?' The old carpenter then said, 'When the Brahmins consecrate the deity then the god incarnates and enters the form.' I observed this consecration ceremony carefully, but I was never able to see any divine manifestation. I thought that the carpenter was a fairly wise fellow and so I went to his house and asked him to explain again. He then said to me, 'I have no faith in this worship of idols. My belief is that the Brahmins simply use this as a means of deception for taking money from gullible people.'

The carpenter's words brought me great pleasure and I asked him to tell me something about the Supreme Lord. He said, 'Say what you will, I believe in nothing other than the one Supreme Lord, Parameshvara. The gods and goddesses are all imaginary. I worship the one God every day.' These words of the old man gave me faith.

"I became even more inquisitive. The Muslim footman Golam Khan used to guard the treasury. Once in response to my questions, he said, 'God's name is Khoda. At one time he was alone and there was no one and nothing but him. Then he took the dirt from his body and made a pancake out of it which he threw into the single ocean. The upper part of the pancake became the sky and the lower part became the earth. He then created humankind, starting with Adam and Eve. We are all the descendants of Adam and Eve.' After hearing this myth, I asked him, 'Who do you think Rama is?' He said, 'Rama and Rahim are one. That is Khoda.' Then I learned from him about a spell which chases ghosts. Golam Khan said, 'Ghosts are the descendants of Satan. They are afraid of the name of Rahim.' These teachings gave me great pleasure.

"My maternal uncle Parashurama Mustaufi was studying law at that time. At first, he had some faith in God, but later dismissed the idea. While he was a believer, my other uncles Raghu and Nashu were his followers. When he stopped believing in the personal god, he started calling Rama Mohana Raya his guru. I was very troubled because, being just an ignorant child, I was uncomfortable having a difference of opinion with him. Uncle Parashurama said, 'Everything in the world is a product of natural forces. There is no such thing as a God outside of nature.' When I heard this, I went to see some Bhattacharya in his school and asked him to respond to it. His answers caused me to become more confused. Though I was confused, I never gave up chanting the name of Rama."

From all these stories, we can draw the lesson that rather than entering into the confusing business of establishing exact doctrines of the relation of the divine and the creation, one should chant the Holy Name with faith. At one point, Mahaprabhu also bound his books in their cloth wrappers and told his students to simply chant the Holy Name. Dogmatic truths will all be revealed through the Holy Name. Dogmatic spiritual truth is not arrived at through mental speculation; one is bound to arrive at a mistaken conception of God.

Kedaranatha's marriage

When Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur was only eleven years old, his father died. According to the custom prevalent at that time, Kedaranatha's mother arranged for her twelve-year-old son to be married to a five-year-old from nearby Ranaghat. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur has the following to say about his marriage: "It was just like a doll's play-marriage. Because I would not be able to stay alone at my in-laws' house, my parents sent my nanny to accompany me." Though the Thakur had direct perception of human entanglement, he did nothing to protest the defects of the marriage system of the period.

Studies

At six years of age, Kedaranatha went to study Sanskrit at the Tola of Vidyavacaspati. Then at the age of seven, his grandfather sent him to study at Krishnagar College. At that time, the college principal's name was Captain D. L. Richardson and the principle native professor was Ramtanu Lahiri. The next year, an English-language school was established in Ula in which Kedaranatha was enrolled. While studying at Krishnagar College, one of his fellow students was the King of Koochbihar, who was still a child.
When his maternal grandfather died, he and his mother came to live in Calcutta at the family home at the corner of Beadon Street and Hedua in Bhawanipur. He recommenced his studies at the Hindu Charitable Trust School. After four years there, he was admitted to the Hindu School in 1856.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur was one of Ishvaracandra Vidyasagara's first students, whom he held in great affection. One day, Bhaktivinoda visited the great scholar in his house in Calcutta. Vidyasagara Mahashaya said to him, "Since none of us has ever seen God, it is best that we not talk about him." Though he was his student, Bhaktivinoda Thakur did not refrain from speaking the truth to the venerated teacher. He asked, "Pandit Mahashaya, why then did you write in your [children's] book Bodhodaya that God is formless and pure consciousness. If you haven't seen God, then why have you written this about him? God is omnipotent. Don't you think that if he can do anything, that he has the power to maintain a form? The Supreme Lord is my eternal master, and I am his eternal servant. The natural affection that we have for the Supreme Lord is called bhakti, brahma-vidya or para-vidya in the Veda. This is real knowledge, the realization of which means that there is no shortage of any knowledge."

Those who are always engaged in a direct relationship with the absolute truth, the Supreme Lord, are immediately able to recognize any statement which goes contrary to the spiritual truth. There is a complete difference between knowledge which has been garnered from the reading of books and the knowledge which arises from the epiphany of the self-effulgent truth.

Calcutta University was founded in 1856 and entrance exams held for the first time. Amongst Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur’s fellow students were Satyendranath and Ganendranath Tagore, Tarak Nath Palit and Naragopal Mitra. Principal Clint, Reverend Duff, George Thompson, and Keshab Chandra Sen were attracted by the young man’s mastery of the English language and literature. Toward the end of 1856, Kedaranatha published an English poem, The Poriade, which was well-received in educated circles in Calcutta. All the Thakur’s English poems were published in the paper, Library (Literary) Gazette. He delivered a lecture to the British Indian Society in 1856 on the evolution of matter which was much applauded.

During this time, the Thakur also studied the Brahma Dharma, Christianity, the Bible and Qur’an and many other religious traditions and books. He considered Christianity superior to the Brahma religion because of its acceptance of God’s eternal personality. In 1857, the Sepoy Mutiny broke out. Kedaranatha spent some of this time traveling and lecturing.

The prediction of grandfather Krishnavallabha

In 1858, Kedaranatha went to Nilachala. On the way back to Calcutta, he stopped at Chutigram, where his grandfather Krishnavallabha Datta was living. His grandfather said prophetically that Kedaranatha would be a great Vaishnava. Immediately upon making this prediction, his life airs passed out through the top of his head. Kedaranatha remained there for a few more days before continuing through Cuttack, Bhadrak, and Midnapor to Calcutta.

The title 'Bhaktivinoda'

On Ishvara Candra Vidyasagara’s recommendation, Kedaranatha Datta took a job teaching at the Cuttack Government Secondary School and shortly thereafter, the headmaster’s position at a school in Bhadrak in 1860. During this time, he wrote a book on the various religious institutions of Orissa, Maths of Orissa, which Sir William Hunter made much use of as a reference work in his Orissa.

He also wrote a work named Shri-Caitanya-Gita under the pen name Saccidananda Premalankara. He was given the title Bhaktivinoda by the Sri Gaudiya Goswami Sangha on the 400th anniversary of Mahaprabhu's appearance (1885). From this time on, Kedaranatha Datta was known in Vaishnava society as Sri Saccidananda Bhaktivinoda Thakur.

Travels and Preaching

The Thakur also taught at a school in Midnapore. One day a follower of the Brahmo religion, Rama Narayan Basu, heard him speak at literary society meeting on the truth of religion and was deeply affected. During his time in Midnapor, the Thakur's first wife died and he married for a second time, to Bhagavati Devi. From Midnapore, he went to Burdwan to preach. While there, he published an English book, Our Wants, in 1863. He was involved in the arguments between the Brahmo Samaj and Christians and tried to mediate between the two religions. In two lectures he showed the problems with both groups' positions. While in Burdwan, he started a group called the Bhratri-samaja. At one of the meetings of this group, he gave a learned speech on the soul which attracted the attention of a certain Mr. Heiley.

From Burdwan, the Thakur went to Chuadanga and Ranaghat before going to live temporarily in Chapra in Bihar. While living there, he made his first visit to Vrindavan, traveling by train through Kashi, Mirzapur, Prayag, Agra, etc. While in Chapra, the Thakur studied Urdu and Persian and mastered these languages. He also gave a speech on Gautama while there.

From Chapra, he went to Purniya and then, in 1868, to Dinajpur where he was engaged as Deputy Magistrate. In Dinajpur, he found that there was a dispute between Hindus and Brahmos in which he intervened, giving a speech on the Bhagavat: Its Philosophy, Its Ethics and Its Theology.

In June of 1868, he visited Rupa and Sanatan's home in Ramakeli as well as Rajmahal, etc. Thereafter he returned to Calcutta, where he undertook research to find copies of Chaitanya-caritamrita and Srimad Bhagavatam. After much work, he finally found copies at the Bata Tala publishing house. With these valuable editions, he went to Purushottam Dhama. He was engaged as a director of the temple to oversee its management. He lived in Puri continuously for over five years, from 1869-1874.

Punishing Bishikishana for deception

In Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur's life we find that he personified the description of a Vaishnava as one who is more gentle than a rose, yet more terrible than the thunderbolt. Although he was generally kind and sympathetic, he gave no quarter to dishonesty in the name of religion. One event in his life which took place while he was in Orissa is an indication of this. In 1871, a member of the Khandait caste and the Atibarii sect named Bishakishana who had gained some mystic powers through yogic practices proclaimed himself to be an incarnation of Mahavishnu. He was staying with his acolytes at the edge of the jungle near the town of Bhuvaneshvara. He announced that on the 14th of Chaitra, he would reveal a four-armed form and destroy all the foreigners, restoring the true religion. His announcement was written in Orissan verse:

banere achi bishakishana
guptare achi na janani ana
tera minare arambhiba rana,
caturbhuja hoi nashiba mleccha-gana

In the forest am I hiding and no one else knows me. But on the 13th of Mina I will begin the war. Taking on a four-armed form, I will destroy the Mlecchas.

Through his mystic powers, he had been able to cure incurable diseases and these powers had won for him a large following. One day he announced that on the full-moon day he would perform the rasa-lila and invited the girls of a nearby village to come and join him. The Chaudhuris of the Bhringara clan found that he had polluted their womenfolk and went to complain en masse to the district commissioner, Ravenshaw. The Commissioner gave the task of investigating the matter to Bhaktivinoda Thakur, who went personally into the jungle to meet with Bishakishana. Bishakishana told Bhaktivinoda that he was the living Mahavishnu and that Jagannath Deva was nothing but a lifeless wooden statue. He tried in various ways to flatter the Thakur and to win him over. When he saw that Bishakishana had no intention of stopping his efforts to deceive the people, Bhaktivinoda had him arrested and brought back to Puri.

The Thakur proceeded to investigate the background of Bishakishana by going to many villages and Buddhist viharas in the Khandagiri area of Puri district. After accumulating a mass of evidence showing the extent to which this yogi was cheating people, he had him brought to court. While the case was being

heard, the yogi used his mystic power to cause Bhaktivinoda and his family to be attacked by various illnesses, in an effort to intimidate him, but without success. The Thakur was determined to see Bishakishana punished for conspiracy to rebellion and gave him a sentence of one and a half years. Bishakishana went for 21 days without food or drink and then left his body.

In the months which followed, another rascal in Jajpur proclaimed himself to be the incarnation of Brahma, while someone else in Khurda said that he was a manifestation of Balaram. Bhaktivinoda Thakur quickly thwarted their efforts to cheat the populace.

Other activities of the Thakur in Puri

While living in Puri, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur took the opportunity to study the Bhagavat, the Six Sandarbhas of Jiva Goswami, the Govinda-bhashya, Siddhanta-ratnam, Prameya-ratnavali, etc., of Baladeva Vidyabhushana. He also studied Rupa Goswami's Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu in great detail. By making a display of intense study, he demonstrated the necessity of cultivating an understanding of the scriptures in order to learn the truths about pure devotion contained therein. Mahaprabhu indicated that one of the five principle limbs of devotional service is hearing the Bhagavat. Jiva Goswami indicated that this is the best of all devotional activities. In order to proclaim this same truth, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur founded a regular group for discussion of the Bhagavat, Bhagavata Samsat which was held in the Jagannath-vallabha gardens in Puri.

Many of the leading Vaishnavas in Puri such as Nityananda Das, Paramananda Das, Narayan Das Mahanta, Harihara Das Mahanta of Uttara Parshva were attracted to hearing the Bhagavat from his lips. Just as Mahaprabhu performed the pastime of hearing Bhagavat from Srila Gadadhara Pandit Goswami, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur also listened to discourses given by Sri Gopinath Pandit. A certain renounced Vaishnava, Raghunath Das Babaji of Hati Akharia, objected to the Thakur's speaking on Bhagavat and was attacked by disease. After Jagannath appeared to him in a dream and ordered him, he went and begged Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur for forgiveness, after which he was cured.

When the Thakur went to the Jagannath Temple, he did not sit in the so-called Mukti-mandapa, where Mayavadi scholars discussed their philosophy. He would sit by the Lakshmi temple where Mahaprabhu's footprints are enshrined and discussed devotional doctrines there. Many of the Mayavadis were attracted by

his discourses and soon the place became known as the Bhakti-mandapa or the Bhakti-prangana.

During this time, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur studied Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami's Chaitanya Charitamrita, Narahari Chakravarti's Bhakti-ratnakara, but he did not accept Jayananda's Chaitanya-mangala as being authoritative. He associated with a siddha Vaishnava named Svarupa Das Babaji, discussing scripture with him. He also wrote the Sanskrit work, Datta-kaustubha and began writing the Sanskrit verses of Shri-krishna-samhita.

The birth of Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati

A wealthy family in Puri had leased land along the Grand Road from the Dakshina Parshva Math and build a house on it. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur and his family resided in this building, which is not far from the Jagannath temple, next to the Narayan Chata. This house was reclaimed in 1974 by His Grace Bhakti Dayita Madhava Goswami Maharaj and now houses a Chaitanya Gaudiya Math with a beautiful temple building.

At 3:30 on Friday, February 6, 1874, on the Krishna-païcami of Magh month, an effulgent and beautiful child was born to Bhagavati Devi in this home, while the Thakur and other family members sang the names of the Lord. Everyone was amazed to see that the child's umbilical cord was wrapped around his body like a sacred thread. He was named after the divine energy of Jagannath Deva, Vimala Devi, as Bimala Prasad (Vimala-prasada). His first solid food was Jagannath's maha prasad. When he grew up, this child became the founder of the Chaitanya Math and the worldwide Gaudiya Maths, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur Prabhupada.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur was Jagannath Deva's own man. It was by his arrangement that he was brought to Puri and put in charge of the temple's management. After the birth of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur, the preaching of Mahaprabhu's message spread over the entire planet. This gave meaning to the words written by Vyasadeva in the Padma-Purana, hy utkale purushottamat, "out of Purushottam in Orissa."

Ten months after the child's birth, Bhaktivinoda Thakur returned to Bengal with his family, this time going to Ranaghat. They traveled overland by palanquin.

Bhaktivinoda's unequalled contribution

Vedavyasa and the scriptures he wrote are the foundation of all those who claim to follow the Sanatan Dharma. He himself practiced and preached the means by which humankind can attain the supreme peace. Vedavyasa compiled and divided the Veda, wrote the eighteen Puranas and the Mahabharata including the Bhagavad-gita, but remained unsatisfied. Finally, while at Badarikashrama, Narada Muni instructed him to glorify the activities of Sri Krishna in order to attain his pleasure. After writing the twelve cantos of the Srimad Bhagavatam, Vedavyasa finally found the peace he had been looking for. Mahaprabhu Sri Chaitanya preached the Bhagavat religion which is found in this text. After the disappearance of Mahaprabhu and his associates, however, the path of pure devotion became covered with thorns until Bhaktivinoda Thakur appeared to write many books and to preach the pure doctrine of devotional service to Krishna. Through his tireless efforts, all the heretical doctrines were shown to be empty, the path of supreme auspiciousness and compassion was shown to all the world. These efforts can only be said to constitute an unequalled and certainly unsurpassed contribution. Without being empowered by Krishna himself, the message of pure devotion cannot be spread. Such a display of empowerment could not be possible were he not a direct associate of Gauranga Mahaprabhu, Sri Krishna.

Externally he was a householder with family obligations, a government servant engaged in the administrative service, but despite these responsibilities he was still able to write over a hundred books in several different languages. One cannot fail to be impressed by this monumental achievement. Every word of his writing is scripture; every word awakens the spirit of devotion to him who is beyond the grasp of the material senses and mind. Mundane scholars would never be able to achieve the kind of synthesis that he did. His every thought was perfectly reasonable and never far-fetched. His writings are a permanent display of compassion to the fallen souls. His Grace Bhakti Dayita Madhava Maharaj used to say to his disciples, "You need do nothing else other than translate Bhaktivinoda Thakur's books into the world's various languages and you will have done the greatest act of welfare for the people of the world." In fact, everything that is done in the Gaudiya Maths throughout the world has come from Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur.

Bhaktivinoda's travels and preaching activities

After the birth of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur returned to Bengal. From then on he engaged in preaching the doctrine of pure devotional service, traveling throughout India. We will give a brief summary here of all the places he visited during the period between 1877 and 1910, whether for the sake of pilgrimage or for preaching. He went to Amta in the Uluberiiya subdivision, to Abhiram Thakur's Shripata in Khanakula Krishnanagara, Shyamapura, Bhadrak in Orissa, Nariail in Jessore district, Calcutta, Prayag, Vrindavan (where he met Jagannath Das Babaji for the first time), Sri Radha Kund, Sri Govardhana (where he broke up the Kaijhara gang of dacoits who were harassing pilgrims to the Dhama), Mathura, Lucknow, Faiyedabad, Goptara Ghat, Ayodhya and Benares.

He then returned to Calcutta where in 1882 he started construction on Bhakti Bhavana at 181 Maniktola Street. While digging the foundations for the building, a murti of Kurmadeva was found. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur gave this deity to Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur and taught him how to worship it. He also visited Mayapur for the first time.

He was engaged as Deputy Collector in the Barasat subdivision. Then he was transferred to Shriramapura (1884) Vaidyanatha, Bakipura, and Gaya, where he saw the steps on Pretashila constructed by his great-grandfather, Madana Mohana Datta. He returned to Nariail, Barasat, Memari, Kulinagrama, Byandel, and Saptagram. In Kulinagrama he lectured on the Holy Name, distinguishing between the pure name, namabhasa and namaparadha. There he also gave Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur initiation in the Holy Name and the Nrisingha mantra.

In Calcutta in 1885, he established the Chaitanya-yantra printing press. In 1886, he helped establish the Vishva-Vaishnava-sabha at the Durga Mandapa of Rama Gopal Basu in Krishnasimhera Gali off Bethune Road. There he gave lectures on Chaitanya Charitamrita and Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu. He met Ramakrishna Paramahamsa at this time and countered his impersonal philosophy and described the truth of pure devotion to him.

Discovery of Mahaprabhu's birthplace

In 1887, he visited the most important Shiva-linga in Bengal at Tarakeshvara

where Shiva appeared to him in a dream and said, “You want to go to Vrindavan, but there is much work left to do in Nabadwip Dhama nearby. What have you done there?” Later that year, he was transferred to Krishnanagara. Then, while visiting Kuliya, the modern city of Nabadwip, he was standing on the roof of the Ranira Dharmashala overlooking the Ganges. At about ten o’clock at night, he saw an illuminated building on the other side of the river. His son Kamala Prasada who was there with him also saw this light. On inquiry, they learned that this place was Ballaladighi. When he made inquiries from the elderly residents of Ballaladighi, they told him that this was the birthplace of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur continued to research old maps and documents and was able to establish conclusively that Mahaprabhu’s birthplace was indeed there.

He continued to maintain his Calcutta home where he installed a Giradhari Shila given him by Jagannath Das Babaji, but in 1888 purchased the property in Godrumadvipa known as Surabhi Kuïja. While working at Krishnanagara he was also able to visit his birthplace at Ula.

In 1889, he was transferred to East Bengal in the Netrakona subdivision in Mymensingh District, whence he visited Narayan Gaij, Mymensingh city, the Garo Hills where he blessed the people of the Hajong tribe, and Gowalanda. Though he was able to visit Calcutta during this period, he was soon transferred to Tangail and then to Burdwan. He visited Shantipur, Kalna, Baghna Para, Kaigram, and Denur, the site of Vrindavan Das Thakur’s Shripata. During this time he visited Kuliya again where he met Jagannath Das Babaji at his bhajana-kutira. He had a concrete veranda built on this occasion (May, 1890). While in Burdwan, he also performed kirtan with the devotees of Amlajora village and visited Gopalpura, Raniganj and Barakara.

In 1890, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur was again transferred to Raniganj in East Bengal and then back to Dinajpur in 1891. When he visited Calcutta, he met Shishira Kumara Ghosh who considered him a guru, even calling him “the seventh Goswami”. Shishira Kumara Ghosh would come regularly to visit him at Bhakti Bhavan and at the Thakur’s direction, started chanting japa and wearing a tulasi mala around his neck. He was not able to accept the principles of Vaishnava behavior in their entirety, however.

During this period Bhaktivinoda also visited Midnapore (Medinipura), where he preached to Sitanatha Mahapatra and other devotees, Ghatal in Midnapore district and Kayapata Badana Gaij in Hooghly district. From there he returned to Krishnanagar, staying once again in Surabhi Kuïja. He arranged for some large assemblies to be called in Krishnanagara at which he spoke. Messrs. Mulrow, Revelshaw, and Butler were regular attendants.

At Amaljora on March 9, 1892, he participated in a Harivasara program at which Jagannath Das Babaji was present. From there he traveled to Vrindavan, stopping at Baksar (Bihar) and Prayag. He was in Vraja from March 21 to 29, during which time he managed to visit Bilvavana, Bhandiravana, Mathavana, Manasarovara, Mathura, Gokula, Madhuvana, Talavana, Kumudavana, Bahulavana, Radhakunda, Govardhana, etc. He then returned to Calcutta via Kanpur and Allahabad.

In Calcutta, he once again engaged in preaching the message of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu at Bhakti Bhavana, as well as continuing to hold assemblies at Krishnanagara. In Magh 1399 (February, 1893), he held a kirtan festival at Godrumadvipa at which Jagannath Das Babaji was the guest of honor. Later that spring, on the 20th of Phalguna (March, 1893), Jagannath Das indicated the exact spot where Mahaprabhu had first appeared in this world.

At this time, the Thakur had an argument with a certain member of a Goswami family who held that one of Mahaprabhu’s closest associates was a Shudra. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur was very displeased when he heard this and warned him with the words: v

aishnava-caritra, sarvada pavitra, jei ninde himsa kari
bhakativinoda, na sambhashe tare, thake sada mauna dhari

The character of a Vaishnava is always spotless. Bhaktivinoda will not talk to anyone who criticizes a Vaishnava out of spite, but always remains silent. Also at about this time, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur wrote down his guru-parampara and hung it on the outside of Bhakti Bhavan.

In January of 1894, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur held another large meeting at the A.V. School in Krishnanagara. At this meeting it was decided that deities should be installed at Mahaprabhu’s birthplace. At the same time, the Nabadwip Pracarini Sabha was formed to preach the newly discovered birthsite. Nafar

Chandra Pal Bhaktibhushana, the zamindar of Natudaha in Nadia district, was elected executive secretary of the of the Sabha. Dvarika Babu, Nafar Babu, and other members of the Sabha decided that a thatched cottage would be constructed on the site would house deities of Gaura and Vishnupriya. These deities were consecrated on Friday, March 21, 1894 (Chaitra 9, 1300 Bengali), on the Phalguni Purnima, in the midst of a rousing kirtan during a lunar eclipse. For the maintenance of the deities, a committee was formed (Sri Mayapur Seva Samiti) which had many distinguished Vaishnavas as its members, including Shyamalal Goswami, Shashibhushana Goswami, Radhikanatha Goswami, Vipina Vihari Goswami, Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Ajitanatha Nyayaratna, Mahendranatha Bhattacharya Vidyaranya, Satyajivana Lahirii, Raja Vanamali Raya Bahadura or Tariasa in Pabna district, Shishira Kumara Ghosh, Matilal a Ghosh, Yatindranatha Chaudhuri, Mahendranatha Majumdara, the advocate Kishorilala Sarkara, Nalinaksha Datta, Kanailala De Bahadura, Deputy Magistrate Navina Candra Sena, and Jagaccandra Raya.

Bhaktivinoda spends some time in Puri

On October 4, 1894, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur retired from government service and came to live permanently in Surabhi Kuija in Godrumadvipa where he once again gave discourses on the Vaishnava scriptures. Some time after the disappearance of Jagannath Das Babaji in February of 1896, he accepted the invitation of the independent Raja of Tiperrah (Tripura), Birchandra Devavarma Manikya Bahadura, to go to Agartola. He went there with Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati in July 1896 and gave discourses on pure devotional service which enchanted the Raja. Later in the same year, he took Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati to Kashiyang, then in 1898 to Benares and Prayag.
In 1899, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur purchased the property on which Svananda Sukhada Kuija would be built. When the building was finished, he came to perform his bhajana there. Gaura Kishora Das Babaji would come there to hear the Thakur's Bhagavat lectures and it was here that Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur first met him. In 1900, Bhaktivinoda Thakur traveled with Bhaktisiddhanta through Baleshvara, Remuna, Bhuvaneshvara, and Sakshi Gopal to Puri. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur displayed a deep desire to engage in bhajana by the beach near Hari Das Thakur's samadhi and his father arranged with Puri's sub-registrar, Jagabandhu Pattanayaka, for him to be given the service of the Giridhari asana at the Satasana Math. In March of 1901, they came to Puri again and in 1902 the construction of Bhakti-Kuti was begun. At this time the Raja of Cossimbazar,

Manindra Candra Nandi took instruction in devotional service from the Thakur.

In 1903, Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati regularly read and gave discourses on Chaitanya Charitamrita to the Thakur at Bhakti Kuti. The famous Radha ramana Carana Das Babaji came to visit Bhaktivinoda Thakur during this time and they discussed devotional doctrines. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur found Carana Das's activities and dogmas to be heterodox and showed how by reference to the scriptures. Later, after Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur had returned to Nabadwip, Carana Das indicated his desire to participate in the Nabadwip-parikrama that the Thakur had inaugurated, but unfortunately left his body before he was able to do so.

The Thakur returns to Godrumadvipa

In 1906, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur gave a lengthy discourse on Mahaprabhu's teachings at the house of zamindar Yatindranatha Raya Chaudhuri in Taki. On February 26, 1906, the Thakur came to Calcutta again and from there to Svarupa Gaij in Godrumadvipa where he engaged in his devotional activities at Svananda-sukhada-kuïja. While there, a certain Tarakabrahma Goswami of Jessore came to him and asked him to accept the service of his Radha Madhava deities for Mahaprabhu's birthplace. Tarakabrahma Goswami also began to live there with his wife and family, but after a short time it became clear that his behavior was at odds with the standards expected of them and they were obliged to leave. On April 29, 1906, however, the Shri Dhama Pracarini Sabha decided to award an annual stipend of 500 rupees to the temple for the service of Sri Sri Radha Madhava.

In 1908, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur took the dress of a renounced Vaishnava, that of a Bhagavata-paramahamsa, in order to dedicate his life to the full relishing the sacred nectar of Radha and Govinda's intimate pastimes.

On March 25, 1910, which was Phalguni Purnima, Bhakti Pradipa Tirtha, at that time still a householder, visited Bhaktivinoda Thakur at Mayapur and five days later was given initiation by him at Godrumadvipa. Another disciple, Krishna Das Babaji, was living at Svananda-sukhada-kuïja at that time.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur preached that the rules of the Daiva-varnashrama dharma should always be followed. Thus, he upheld the directives of the Sat-kriya-sara-dipika in giving the sacred thread to Jagadisa Bhaktipradipa (who

after taking sannyasa from Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur became Bhaktipradipa Tirtha Maharaj), Sitanatha Mahapatra, Vasanta Kumara Ghosh, and Manmathanatha Raya.

In this connection, it is worth examining the Thakur's following words: "The Varnashrama dharma which is current in society is distinct from the transcendental religion of exclusive devotion to Krishna. The practice of Varnashrama dharma on its own does not result in full surrender to the Lord. The ultimate instruction of the Bhagavad-gita is to discard all the principles related to the varnas and ashramas, in short, all activities based on bodily identification, and to engage in a cultivation of devotional activities based on the natural emotional constitution of the soul, which is pure and without ulterior motive. Dedicated scholars such as Raghavacari have no understanding of this glorious characteristic of Gaudiya Vaishnavism's concept of pure devotion."

Bhaktivinoda sends Bhaktisiddhanta to Balighai

In 1910, while still at Svananda-sukhada Kuija, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur was engaged in writing his Svaniyama-dvadashaka when suddenly he became extremely ill. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur and other dear disciples and followers gathered there, afraid that he was about to enter the nitya-lila. Even in a state of extreme physical discomfort, however, his enthusiasm for preaching Lord Chaitanya's message was unabated. Though unable to walk, he indicated a desire to be taken from place to place on horseback so that he could continue to spread the teachings of Mahaprabhu.

Three years before the Thakur's disappearance, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur approached his father and indicated to him that though he felt himself to be an unworthy servant, he vowed to take up the ultimate welfare work of defeating all the heterodox doctrines which went against pure devotional service. Bhaktivinoda Thakur's was delighted to hear his son's determination and when Gopivallabhapura's Sri Vishvambharananda Deva Goswami invited him to participate in a conference in Balighai, Midnapore, he sent Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur and Sureshacandra Mukhopadhyaya in his place. The conference, the theme of which was to establish orthodox doctrines in certain areas of theology, took place from Sept. 8-11, 1911. Many respected and well-reputed scholars of the sampradaya were present, including Madhusudana Goswami Sarvabhauma of the Radharamana Ghera in Vrindavan.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur gave a talk on the distinctions between a Vaishnava and a Brahmin, demonstrating clearly a great amount of research, which left the assembly of scholars enchanted and speechless. A year later, when Madhusudana Goswami visited Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur at the Bhakti Bhavan he enthusiastically proclaimed that Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur was his capable successor in protecting the Gaudiya sampradaya.

In 1913, Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati wrote a commentary on the Chaitanya-caritamrita meant to accompany the Amrita-pravaha-bhashya written by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur. He read several passages of this Anubhashya to the Thakur, giving him indescribable pleasure.

Bhaktivinoda Thakur’s entry into the eternal pastimes

A few days before his disappearance, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur left Godrumadvipa to come to Bhakti Bhavan. On June 23, 1914, on the disappearance day of Gaura-shakti, Srila Gadadhara Pandit Goswami, in his Calcutta home, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur entered the midday pastimes of Sri Sri Radha and Govinda at Radha Kund. Six years later, the worshipable Mata Thakurani, his wife Sri Bhagavati Devi, went to join him.

Srimad-Bhaktivinoda-viraha-dashakam

(Ten verses describing the feelings of separation from Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur written for the occasion of his disappearance day by His Grace Bhakti-rakshaka Shridhara Deva Goswami in 1936)

ha ha bhaktivinoda thakkura guro dvavimshatis te sama
dirghad-duhkha-bharad ashesha-virahad duhkhikrita bhur iyam
jivanam bahu-janma-punya-nivahakrishto mahimandale
avirbhava-kripam cakara ca bhavan shri-gaura-shaktih svayam 1

Alas! Alas! My guru Bhaktivinoda Thakur! It is now twenty-two long years that the world has been burdened with the grief of your separation. You are the personification of Sri Gauranga’s energy and you mercifully appeared in this world being attracted by many lifetimes of the living beings’ pious activities.

dino'ham cira-dushkritir na hi bhavat-padabja-dhuli-kana-
snanananda-nidhim prapanna-shubhadam labdhum samartho'bhavam
kintv audarya-gunat tavati-yashasah karunya-shaktih svayam
shri-shri-gaura-mahaprabhoh prakatita vishvam samanvagrahit 2

Being most fallen and possessing nothing but sinful activity in my past, I have not been able to attain the joyful treasure of being bathed in the dust of your lotus feet, which brings all auspiciousness to the surrendered. Even so, you are deservedly renowned for your magnanimity. You are the personification of Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's compassionate powers who have appeared in this world in order to bestow upon it his divine blessings.

he deva! stavane tavakhila-gunanam te viriïcadayo
deva vyartha-manorathah kim u vayam martyadhamah kurmahe
etan no vibudhaih kadapy atishayalankara ity ucyatam
shastreshv eva na paraye'ham iti yad gitam mukundena ca 3

O Lord! The gods led by Brahma are frustrated when they endeavor to glorify your unlimited virtues. What then can low-born humans such as we accomplish? This is no rhetorical exaggeration, as some scholars may claim, for even Mukunda himself has said the same to the gopis in the Bhagavat (10.32.22).

dharmash carmagato'jïataiva satata yogash ca bhogatmako
jïane shunya-gatir japena tapasa khyati-jighamsaiva ca
dane dambhikatanuraga-bhajane dushtapacaro yada
buddhim buddhimatam bibheda hi tada dhatra bhavan preshitah 4

You were sent by the Lord when even the most intelligent people's wisdom was ruined through religious activities which only sought bodily pleasures, through a constant state of ignorance, in yoga which had sensual enjoyment as its goal, in the idea that the goal of knowledge is the void, in the desire to destroy individual consciousness through prayer and austerity, in arrogant pride in giving charity, and from evil practices spread in the name of raganuga-bhajana.

vishve'smin kiranair yatha himakarah saïjivayan naushadhir
nakshatrani ca raïjayan nija-sudham vistarayan rajate
sac-chastrani ca toshayan budha-ganam sammodayams te tatha
nunam bhumi-tale shubhodaya iti hlado bahuh satvatam 5

Just as in this universe, the moon gives life to the world's vegetation, revitalizes the constellations and spreads its own nectar with its rays, so too, your auspicious appearance on Earth brought satisfaction to the holy scriptures, joy to the intelligent and a great amounts of ecstasy to the Vaishnavas.

lokanam hita-kamyaya bhagavato bhakti-pracaras tvaya
granthanam racanaih satam abhimatair nanavidhair darshitah
acaryaih krita-purvam eva kila yad ramanujadyair budhaih
premambhodhi-vigrahasya bhavato mahatmya-sima na tat 6

Desiring the welfare of everyone in the world, you displayed the method of preaching devotion to the Supreme Lord through writing a variety of books which were appreciated by the saintly. The glorious achievements of all the previous acharyas such as Ramanuja, etc., cannot match yours, for you are the embodiment of the ocean of prema.

yad-dhamnah khalu dhama caiva nigame brahmeti samjïayate
yasyamshasya kalaiva duhkha-nikarair yogeshvarair mrigyate
vaikunthe para-mukta-bhringa-carano narayano yah svayam
tasyamshi bhagavan svayam rasa-vapuh krishno bhavan tat-pradah 7

You came to give the Supreme Person Krishna himself, whose body is the form of sacred rapture, the effulgence of whose abode is known in the Veda as Brahman, whose mere partial expansion is the goal of the great yogis' austere practices, who is the source of Narayan himself, whose lotus feet are surrounded by the most advanced, bee-like liberated souls in Vaikuntha.

sarvacintya-maye paratpara-pure goloka-vrindavane
cil-lila-rasa-rangini parivrita sa radhika shri-hareh
vatsalyadirasaish ca sevita-tanor madhurya-seva-sukham
nityam yatra mada tanoti hi bhavan tad-dhama-seva-pradah 8

You bestowed service to the completely inconceivable divine abode of Goloka Vrindavan, which lies beyond the other spiritual worlds, where Radha, surrounded by her sakhis, whose pleasure is in the transcendental nectar of the spiritual pastimes, joyfully constantly serves in the erotic mood Sri Hari who is worshiped in the moods of parenthood, etc.

shri-gauranumatam Svarupa-viditam rupagrajenadritam
rupadyaih pariveshitam raghu-ganair asvaditam sevitam
jivadyair abhirakshitam shuka-shiva-brahmadi-sammanitam
shri-radha-pada-sevanamritam aho tad datum isho bhavan 9

You are perfectly competent to give the nectar of service to Sri Radha's feet, which was approved by Gauranga Mahaprabhu, which was understood by Svarupa Damodar, adored by Sanatan Goswami, distributed by Sri Rupa Goswami, relished and enjoyed by Raghunath and the rest of Sri Rupa's followers, and which is respected by Suka, Shiva and Brahma, etc.,

kvaham manda-matis tv ativa patitah kva tvam jagat-pavanah
bho svamin kripayaparadha-nicayo nunam tvaya kshamyatam
yace'ham karuna-nidhe varam imam padabja-mule bhavat-
sarvasvavadhi-radhika-dayita-dasanam gane ganyatam 10

I am a wicked-minded fallen soul, so far from you who purify the entire universe. O Master! Please forgive me all my offenses out of your great compassion. I beg you, O ocean of mercy, to grant me this boon that I be included amongst the followers of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur, for whom your lotus feet are everything.

Srimad-Bhaktivinoda-dashakam

(This poem appeared in the Gaudiya magazine, July 1939, 7.47)

amanda-karunya-gunakara shri-
caitanya-devasya dayavatarah
sa gaura-shaktir bhavita punah kim
padam drishor bhakti-vinoda-devah 1

O ocean of unlimited compassion, you are the incarnation of Chaitanya Deva's mercy. You are the energy of Gauranga. O Lord Bhaktivinoda, when will you again be visible to me?

shrimaj-Jagannath-prabhu-priyo ya
ekatmako gaura-kishorakena
shri-gaura-karunya-mayo bhavet kim

nityam smritau bhakti-vinoda-devah 2

When will Bhaktivinoda Prabhu, the embodiment of Mahaprabhu's blessings, remain fixed in my memory? He is dear to Jagannath Prabhu and is not different from Gaura Kishora Das Babaji.

shri-nama-cintamani-sampracarair
adarsham acaravidhau dadhau yah
sa jagarukah smriti-mandire kim
nityam bhaved bhakti-vinoda-devah 3

When will Bhaktivinoda Prabhu, who gave the example how to act by preaching the jewel of the Holy Name, remain alive in the temple of my memory?

namaparadhai rahitasya namno
mahatmya-jatam prakatam vidhaya
jive dayalur bhavita smritau kim
kritasano bhakti-vinoda-devah 4

When will Bhaktivinoda Prabhu, most merciful to all living beings, take his place in my mind after revealing the glories of the Holy Name, void of any offenses?

gaurasya gudha-prakatalayasya
sato'sato harsha-kunatyayosh ca
prakashako gaurajano bhavet kim
smrityaspadam bhakti-vinoda-devah 5

When will I remember Bhaktivinoda Prabhu, the member of Gauranga's entourage who revealed his hidden birthplace, to the joy of the saintly and the envious reaction of the wicked?

nirasya vighnan iha bhakti-ganga-
pravahanenoddhrita-sarvalokah
bhagiratho nitya-dhiyam padam kim
bhaved asau bhakti-vinoda-devah 6

Like King Bhagiratha, he saved the entire world by destroying all impediments and allowing the Ganga of pure devotion to flow. When will Bhaktivinoda

Prabhu be the permanent object of my meditation?

vishveshu caitanya-katha-pracari
mahatmya-shamsi guru-vaishnavanam
nama-grahadarsha iha smritah kim
citte bhaved bhakti-vinoda-devah 7

When will I remember Bhaktivinoda Prabhu, who preached the message of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu throughout the world, who glorified the guru and the Vaishnavas and who set the example for chanting the Holy Name.

prayojanam sann abhidheya-bhakti-
siddhanta-vanya samam atra gaura-
kishora-sambandha-yuto bhavet kim
cittam gato bhakti-vinoda-devah 8

When will Bhaktivinoda Prabhu, himself the representative of the proyojana-tattva, appear in my mind, accompanied by Gaura Kishora Das Babaji, the personification of the sambandha-tattva, and by Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati, the incarnation of the abhidheya-tattva. [bhakti-vinoda or taking delight in devotional service is the ultimate goal of prema, sambandha is the relationship with Mahaprabhu (Gaura-kishora) and the devotional processes established by the doctrine, or bhakti-siddhanta are the abhidheya-tattva.]

shikshamritam sajjana-toshanim ca
cintamanim catra sajaiva-dharmam
prakashya caitanya-prado bhavet kim
citte dhrito bhakti-vinoda-devah 9

When will Bhaktivinoda Prabhu, who made people conscious of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu through his publications Chaitanya-shikshamrita, Sajjana-toshani, Harinama-cintamani, and Jaiva Dharma, be held constantly in my mind.

ashadha-darshe'hani gaura-shakti-
gadadharabhinna-tanur jahau yah
prapaïca-lilam iha no bhavet kim
drishyah punar bhakti-vinoda-devah 10

When will Bhaktivinoda Prabhu appear to us again? Being non-different from

Gaura-shakti Gadadhara Pandit, he left the material world on the same day as he, the dark-moon-day of Asharha month.

Sri Godrumacandra-bhajanopadesha

(“Instructions to worship the Moon of Godruma”. These verses were published posthumously for the first time in 1950 in Gaudiya magazine, 18.47-8 (pp. 757-8)

yadi te hari-pada-saroja-sudha-
rasa-pana-param hridayam satatam
parihritya griham kali-bhava-mayam
bhaja godruma-kanana-kuïja-vidhum 1

If your heart wishes to always drink the nectar of Hari’s lotus feet, then abandon your home which is filled with the spirit of Kali and worship the moon of Godruma’s forest bowers.

dhana-yauvana-jivana-rajya-sukham
Nahi nityam anukshana-nasha-param
tyaja gramya-katha-sakalam viphalam
bhaja godruma-kanana-kuïja-vidhum 2

All your joys from wealth, youth, life and power are all temporary and susceptible to destruction at any moment. Give up all your useless mundane discourses and worship the moon of Godruma’s forest bowers.

ramani-jana-sanga-sukham ca sakhe
carame bhayadam purushartha-haram
hari-nama-sudha-rasa-matta-matir
bhaja godruma-kanana-kuïja-vidhum 3

O friend! The joys of intercourse with beautiful women are ultimately a source of fear, for they prevent the achievement of life’s goals. Become intoxicated with the nectar of the Holy Names and worship the moon of Godruma’s forest bowers.

jada-kavya-raso nahi kavya-rasah
kali-pavana-gaura-raso hi rasah

alam any-kathady-anushilanaya
bhaja godruma-kanana-kuïja-vidhum 4

The relishing of poetic sentiments is not the sacred rapture of devotional poetry. Real sacred rapture is found in the sentiments connected to the purifier of the age of Kali, Gaura. Give up the study of all other subjects and worship the moon of Godruma's forest bowers.

vrishabhanu-sutanvita-vama-tanum
yamuna-tata-nagara-nanda-sutam
murali-kala-gita-vinoda-param
bhaja godruma-kanana-kuïja-vidhum 5

Worship the moon of Godruma's forest bowers, the son of Nanda, the playboy who sports on the Yamuna's banks with the daughter of Vrishabhanu at his left side, joyfully playing wonderful songs on his flute.

hari-kirtana-madhyagatam svajanaih
pariveshtita-jambunadabha-harim
nija-gauda-janaika-kripa-jaladhim
bhaja godruma-kanana-kuïja-vidhum 6

Worship the moon of Godruma's forest bowers, the ocean of mercy for his own associates from the land of Gauda, whose effulgent form, surrounded by these associates as he dances in the midst of the kirtan, has been stolen from refined gold.

giriraja-suta-parivita-griham
nava-khanda-patim yati-citta-haram
sura-sangha-nutam priyaya sahitam
bhaja godruma-kanana-ku-vidhum 7

Worship the moon of Godruma's forest bowers, whose house is surrounded by the daughters of the king of mountains, who is the Lord of the abode of nine islands, who steals the minds of the sannyasis and who, in the company of his beloved, is praised by the heavenly hosts.

kali-kukkura-mudgara-bhava-dharam
hari-nama-mahaushadha-dana-param

patitarta-dayardra-sumurti-dharam
bhaja godruma-kanana-ku-vidhum 8

Worship the moon of Godruma's forest bowers, who has taken the mood of the hammer-wielding chastiser of the Kali-dog, who brings the gift of the Holy Name medicine, and whose form is soaked in tearful compassion for the fallen.

ripu-bandhava-bheda-vihina-daya
yad abhikshnam udeti mukhabja-tatau
tam akrishnam iha vraja-raja-sutam
bhaja godruma-kanana-ku-vidhum 9

His mercy makes no distinction between friend and foe. Though his bodily hue is not black, he is the son of the King of Vraja. Worship the moon of Godruma's forest bowers.

iha copanishat-parigita-vibhur
dvija-raja-sutah puratabha-harih
nija-dhamani khelati bandhu-yuto
bhaja godruma-kanana-ku-vidhum 10

Worship the moon of Godruma's forest bowers--he whose glories are sung in the Upanishads and is now a son of the best of Brahmins with a golden bodily hue, playing in his own dham with his eternal associates.

avatar-varam paripurna-phalam
para-tattvam ihatma-vilasa-mayam
vraja-dhama-rasambudhi-gupta-rasam
bhaja godruma-kanana-ku-vidhum 11

Worship the moon of Godruma's forest bowers, who is the best of the incarnations of the Supreme, who brings the ultimate fruit of spiritual life, who is the Supreme Truth come into this world out of his own pleasure and who relish a taste hidden in the ocean of rapture that is Vraja Dhama.

shruti-varna-dhanadi na yasya kripa-
janane balavad-bhajanena vina
tam ahaituka-bhava-patha hi sakhe
bhaja godruma-kanana-ku-vidhum 12

Learning or high birth are useless in bringing about his mercy without intense bhajana. O friend, worship the moon of Godruma's forest bowers without any desire for any fruits.

api nakra-gatau hrada-madhya-gatam
kam amocayad arta-janam tam ajam
avicintya-balam shiva-kalpa-tarum
bhaja godruma-kanana-ku-vidhum 13

This same Lord also once liberated a distressed demigod from a crocodile body within the lake known as Goradaha. He is the unborn one, possessing inconceivable power, and is truly a desire tree of pure auspiciousness. Just worship the beautiful Moon of Godruma's forest bowers. [FN: This incident is recounted in Jagadananda's Prema-vilasa, chapter 15.]

surabhindra-tapah-paritushta-mano
vara-varna-dharo harir avirabhut
tam ajasra-sukham muni-dhairya-haram
bhaja godruma-kanana-ku-vidhum 14

When his mind was pleased by the austerities of Indra and Surabhi, he appeared in a golden form before them. Worship the moon of Godruma's forest bowers, who brings unlimited pleasure and who disturbs the calm minds of the silent sages. [This incident is described in Bhaktivinoda's Nabadwip-dhama-mah'ya.]

abhilasha-cayam tad abheda-dhiyam
ashubham ca shubham ca tyaja sarvam idam
anukulataya priya-sevanaya
bhaja godruma-kanana-ku-vidhum 15

Give up all your desires for sense enjoyment. Give up the idea that you are identical with the Lord. Abandon both auspicious and inauspicious works. Only worship the moon of Godruma's forest bowers with acts compatible with his pleasure and by serving those dear to him.

hari-sevaka-sevana-dharma-paro
hari-nama-rasamrita-pana-ratah
nati-dainya-daya-paramana-yuto

bhaja godruma-kanana-ku-vidhum 16

Become fixed in the religion of serving the servants of Hari. Be fixed in drinking the nectar of the Holy Names. Always be fixed in respect, humility and compassion. Worship the moon of Godruma's forest bowers.

vada yadava madhava krishna hare
vada rama janardana keshava he
vrishabhanu-suta-priyanatha sada
bhaja godruma-kanana-ku-vidhum 17

Sing the names of Yadava, Madhava, Krishna and Hari. Sing the names of Rama, Janardana and Keshava. Always sing the name of the dearest lord of the daughter of Vrishabhanu. Worship the moon of Godruma's forest bowers.

vada yamuna-tira-vanadri-pate
vada gokula-kanana-pu-rave
vada rasa-rasayana gaura-hare
bhaja godruma-kanana-ku-vidhum 18

Sing the name of the Lord of the forests by the Yamuna banks. Sing the name of the sun which lights up the gardens of Gokula. Sing the name of Gaurahari, the alchemist of sacred rapture. Worship the moon of Godruma's forest bowers.

cala gaura-vanam nava-khandamayam
patha gauraharesh caritani muda
lutha gaura-padankita-ganga-tatam
bhaja godruma-kanana-ku-vidhum 19

Go live in Gauranga's forest with its nine divisions. Study the lives of Gaurahari. Roll about in the dust by the banks of the Ganges marked with Gauranga's footprints. And worship the moon of Godruma's forest bowers.

smara gaura-gadadhara-keli-kalam
bhava gaura-gadadhara-paksha-carah
shrnu gaura-gadadhara-caru-katham
bhaja godruma-kanana-ku-vidhum 20

Remember always the enchanting pastimes of Gaura-Gadadhara. Become a

follower of Gaura-Gadadhara. Always listen to the enchanting topics of Gaura-Gadadhara. Worship the moon of Godruma's forest bowers.

A list of Bhaktivinoda Thakur's written works

Other than the titles already mentioned, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur wrote numerous works from 1866 to 1907 which are listed here as far as possible.

(1) Balid-e-registry (Urdu), 1856.
(2) Speech on Gautam (English), 1856.
(3) Speech on the Bhagavatam (English), 1869.
(4) Garbha-stotra-vyakhya (Bengali), 1870.
(5) Reflections (English), 1871.
(6) Slokas of Haridas Thakur's Samadhi (English), 1871.
(7) Jagannatha Mandir of Puri (English), 1871.
(8) Akhras of Puri (English), 1871.
(9) Vedantadhikarana-mala (Sanskrit), 1872.
(10) Datta-kaustubham (Sanskrit), 1874.
(11) Datta-vamsha-mala (Sanskrit), 1876.
(12) Bauddha-vijaya-kavyam (Sanskrit), 1878.
(13) Shri-Krishna-samhita (Sanskrit and Bengali), 1880.
(14) Kalyana-kalpa-taru (Bengali songs), 1881.
(15) Shri-sajjana-toshani (Bengali monthly magazine) from 1881-1898.
(16) Review of Nitya-Svarupa-samsthapana (English), 1883.
(17) Srimad-Bhagavad-gita, with Vishvanath Chakravarti's commentary, and Rasika-rasa translation (Bengali), 1886.
(18) Shri-Caitanya-shikshamrita (Bengali), 1886.
(19) Sammodana commentary to Shikshashtaka (Sanskrit), 1886.
(20) Manah-shiksha padyanuvada (Bengali), 1886.
(21) Dashopanishac-curnika (Sanskrit), 1886.
(22) Bhavavali, verses and commentary (Sanskrit), 1886.
(23) Prema-pradipa (Bengali novel), 1886.
(24) Vishnu-sahasra-nama with Baladeva's commentary (Sanskrit), 1886.
(25) Published Satyaraja Khan's Shri-Krishna-vijaya, 1886.
(26) Caitanyopanishat with Chaitanya-caranamrita commentary (Sanskrit), 1887.
(27) Vaishnava-siddhanta-mala (Bengali), 1888.
(28) Shri-Amnaya-sutra (Sanskrit sutras, Bengali explanation), 1890.
(29) Shridhama-Nabadwip-mahatmya (Bengali), 1890.
(30) Siddhanta-darpana translation (Bengali), 1890.

(31) Srimad-Bhagavad-gita, Bengali translation (Vidvad-ra'na-bhashya) and Baladeva's Sanskrit commentary (Bengali), 1891.
(32) Shri-Harinama (Bengali), 1892.
(33) Shri-Nama (Bengali), 1892.
(34) Shri-Nama-tattva (Bengali), 1892.
(35) Shri-Nama-mahima (Bengali), 1892.
(36) Shri-Nama-pracara (Bengali), 1892.
(37) Shriman-Mahaprabhura Shiksha (Bengali), 1892.
(38) Tatta-viveka (Sanskrit verses and Bengali comment), 1893.
(39) Sharanagati (Bengali songs), 1893.
(40) Shoka-shatana (Bengali song), 1893.
(41) Jaiva-dharma (Bengali), 1893.
(42) Tattva-sutra (Sanskrit and Bengali), 1894.
(43) Ishopanishat Vedarka-didhiti-vyakhya (Bengali), 1894.
(44) Tattva-muktavali or Mayavada-shata-dushani (Sanskrit and Bengali), 1894.
(45) Amrita-pravaha-bhashya on Chaitanya-caritamrita (Bengali), 1895.
(46) Shri-Gauranga-smarana-mangala-stotra (Sanskrit), 1896.
(47) Life and Precepts of Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (English), 1896.
(48) Shri-Ramanuja-Upedesha (Bengali), 1896.
(49) Artha-paicaka (Bengali), 1896.
(50) Bengali translation of Brahma-samhita, 1897.
(51) Kalyana-kalpa-taru (Revised), 1897.
(52) Translation and comment on Krishnakarnamrita (Bengali), 1898.
(53) Translation and commentary on Upadeshamritam (Bengali), 1898.
(54) Bhagavad-gita with Madhva's commentary (Bengali), 1898.
(55-56) Sanatan Goswami's Brihad-Bhagavatamrita in two volumes (Bengali translation), 1898.
(57) Narahari Thakur's Bhajanamrita (Bengali translation), 1899.
(58) Nabadwip-bhava-tarangini (Bengali verse), 1899.
(59) Shri-Harinama-cintamani (Bengali verse), 1900.
(60) Tattva-vamsha-mala (Bengali)
(61) Bhagavatarka-marici-mala (compilation and Bengali translation), 1900.
(62) Shri-sankalpa-kalpadruma (Bengali translation), 1900.
(63) Padma-purana (edited), 1901.
(64) Bhajana-rahasya (collection of verses and Bengali verse translation), 1902.
(65) Vijana-grama o sannyasai (Bengali verse, revised edition), 1902.
(66) Shri-Krishna-samhita (Sanskrit and Bengali, revised), 1903.
(67) Sat-kriya-sara-dipika (edited), 1903.
(68) Shri-Caitanya-shikshamrita (revised and expanded), 1905.

(69) Prema-vivarta (Bengali), 1905.
(70) Sva-niyama-dvadashakam (Sanskrit verse), 1906.
(71) Shri-Nimbarka-Dasha-shloki (Bengali trans. and comment), 1907.
(72) Shri-Gitimala (Bengali songs), 1907.
(73) Shri-Gitavali (Bengail songs), 1907.
(74) Harikatha (Bengali verse), 1850.
From 1878 to 1881, while Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur was living at Nariala in Jessore district, he wrote Shri-Krishna-samhita and Kalyana-kalpa-taru and started publishing the monthly magazine, Sajjana-toshani. While in Barasat in 1883, he published Sajjana-toshani in English. Then while in Serampore (Shriramapura) in 1886 he published his translation-commentary Rasika-raijana with Vishvanath's commentary Sarartha-darshini to Bhagavad-gita, Chaitanya-shikshamrita, Sanmodana-bhashya to Shikshamrita and Bhaktivinoda. In 1887 while in Sambalpur, he received an old manuscript of Caitanyopanishat from a disciple named Madhusudana Das. Later in the same year, while living in Krishnanagara, he started work on Amnaya-sutra and published his Nabadwip-mahatmya. In 1896, after returning to Calcutta from Tripura he wrote his English Life and Precepts of Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and the Sanskrit Gauranga-smarana-mangala-stotra.

Srila Gaura Kishore Das Babaji Maharaj

Srila Prabhupada wrote the following words about his guru, with exemplary humility, in order to show the world definitively the path of auspiciousness:
I had encountered many personalities who were reputed to be great saints, but saw various deficiencies in every one of them and so was unable to give them my full respect. Fortunately, the supremely merciful Sri Gauranga Mahaprabhu allowed two of his dearest companions to show their kindness to me. I was egotistically so self-absorbed that I had completely lost any sense of where my well-being could be found. Even so, due to past pious activities, I was able to get the association of Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur who was my ever well-wisher. My

Prabhu often came to visit him and sometimes stayed overnight at his house. Out of mercy to me, Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur introduced me to him. From the time that I first met my Prabhu, my stubborn egoism started to diminish. Previously, I used to think that everyone who took birth in a human body was filled with the same faults that I had, but upon seeing my Prabhu's divine character I realized that there truly were flawless Vaishnavas in this world who matched the ideal.

Many people who saw Gaura Kishor Das Babaji, whether innocent or experienced, young or old, learned or ignorant, or proud of their being advanced devotees, were not able to truly see him. This is the divine power of Krishna's devotees. Hundreds of people came to him seeking help in fulfilling their material desires and he would give them advice, but this was a kind of deception. There are countless persons who take on the dress of a saintly person and make a show of acting like a saintly person, but on closer analysis are far from the standard. My Prabhu was not a cheater like them. It is clear from his spiritual activities that he identified complete honesty with the truth. His sincere affection was incomparable; it proved that the attainment of spiritual powers is a deception. He showed no enmity for those who opposed him or disagreed with him; similarly, he made no particular external show of affection for those who were objects of his compassion. He used to say, 'I neither love nor hate anyone in this world; everyone is the object of my respect.'

Amazingly, Prabhu would be surrounded by people with no understanding– fakers and materialists inimical to the path of pure devotion who thought themselves to be recipients of such a saintly person's mercy, but continued to engage in sensual activities. Prabhu never openly rejected any of these people, but he never openly accepted any of them, either.

Babaji Maharaj's Teachings

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur recounted some events from Gaura Kishor Das Babaji's life which are full of import for the practitioner of devotional life:

(1) On one occasion, a certain Babaji came to visit Srila Gaura Kishor Das Babaji with some of his followers in tow. These acolytes began glorifying their guru to Babaji Maharaj, "Our Prabhu is so merciful. He takes so much trouble to travel from place to place to deliver the poor, fallen souls. If he did not travel, what would be the destiny of these forsaken places?" Babaji Maharaj

immediately became cross and answered, “If someone makes a pretense of delivering the world when in fact he is only interested in making money and garnering prestige, he not only does no one any good, but falls down for having cheated others.”

(2) One day, a few devotees were describing the expertise of a particular lecturer on the Bhagavata. Babaji Mahashaya knew that this individual received money for his services. He said, “This fellow does not explain the Bhagavata or the scriptures of the Goswamis. He is simply speaking on the sense-gratificatory scriptures. He isn’t chanting ‘Gaura, Gaura!’ or ‘Krishna, Krishna!’, but ‘Money! Money!’. It has nothing to do with bhajan. The end result is that the true Vaishnava religion is obscured. Nothing good can come from it; indeed, the world will be harmed by such preaching.”

(3) The owner of the Nabadwip Dharma Shala was a certain Girisa Babu. One day, his wife offered to build a cottage for Babaji Maharaj. He answered, “I have no problem sleeping under the straw shelter on a boat. The only problem I have is that so many rascals are constantly coming to me asking me to bless them. They disturb my chanting. They don’t really want my blessings because they don’t really want what is best for them, but still they come to disrupt my chanting the Holy Name. If you give me your brick outhouse, I will be able to chant in peace. No one will come to bother me there.” When he realized that Babaji Mahashaya was serious, Girsa Babu immediately had the outhouse purified with cowdung and brought in a mason to completely redo the building.

(4) One day the Raja of Cossim Bazar, Sir Manindra Candra Nandi Bahadur, invited Babaji Maharaj to his palatial residence for a Vaishnava assembly. Babaji Mahashaya answered, “If you want my association, leave all your riches and come and live under a bamboo shelter like mine. You won’t have to worry about food. I will beg enough to feed both of us. If I go to stay in your palace, it won’t be long before I start desiring to enjoy sense gratification. I will start thinking about how I can accumulate a property for myself. Then before you know it, I will become your enemy. If you want to preserve our friendship and if you wish to be kind to me as your Vaishnava friend, then you will come to the Dham and join me in worshiping the Lord and eating madhukari.”

[Excerpted from "Sri Chaitanya: His Life & Associates"]

Srila Gopal Bhatta Goswami

ananga-manjari yasit sadya gopala-bhattakah |
bhatta-gosvaminam kecit ahuh sri-guna-manjari ||

She who was formerly Ananga Manjari has appeared to enrich Mahaprabhu's pastimes as Srila Gopal Bhatta Goswami. Some say that Gopal Bhatta is actually Guna Manjari. (Gaura-ganoddesa-dipika 184)

Srila Gopal Bhatta Goswami appeared in 1500 AD (though, according to some authorities, he was born in 1503) as the son of Venkata Bhatta in the town of Srirangam in South India. Their residence was in a village not far from Srirangam called Belagundi.

According to Narahari in the Bhakti-ratnakara, Srila Gopal Bhatta Goswami was given a vision in a dream by Mahaprabhu in which he was fortunate enough to witness all the Lord's Nabadwip pastimes. An eternal associate of Krishna, he appeared in a faraway place in order to participate in Lord Gauranga's pastimes. Even so, he was able to know long before he even saw him that the Lord had appeared and taken sannyas. Gopal Bhatta did not particularly like the Lord's appearance as a sannyasi. He was distressed and crying alone when the Lord appeared to him and gave him the dream vision of his Nabadwip lila. In this vision, the Lord was overwhelmed by ecstatic love, embraced him and drenched him in his tears.

Having said this to Gopal, the Lord embraced him and drenched him in his tears. He then told him to keep all these experiences secret, and Gopal felt great joy in his mind. (Bhakti-ratnakara 1.123-4)

Through the power of Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's merciful association, Venkata Bhatta, his brother Prabodhananda Saraswati, his son Gopal Bhatta Goswami, and all the other members of his family, were inspired to give up the worship of Lakshmi-Narayan and became engaged in the exclusive devotional

service of Radha and Krishna. Srila Gopal Bhatta Goswami took initiation from his uncle, Tridandi Yati Srimat Prabodhananda Saraswati. Proof of this is found in the Hari-bhakti-vilasa:

bhakter vilasams cinute prabodha-
nandasya sisyo bhagavat-priyasya |
gopala-bhatto raghunatha-dasam
santosayan rupa-sanatanau ca ||

Gopal Bhatta, the disciple of Prabodhananda who is dear to the Lord, has collected these devotional activities to satisfy Raghunath Das, Rupa and Sanatan Goswamis. (Hbv 1.2)

Gopal's parents were very fortunate, for they surrendered themselves, life and soul, to the feet of Lord Chaitanya. They ordered their son to go to Vrindavan before they left this world, absorbed in meditating on the Lord. Gopal travelled directly to Vrindavan where he met with Rupa and Sanatan. (Bhakti-ratnakara 1.163-5)

Gopal Bhatta comes to Vrindavan

When Gopal arrived in Vrindavan, Rupa and Sanatan wrote to Mahaprabhu to tell him. The Lord was overjoyed and immediately wrote back telling them to affectionately take care of him as though he were their own younger brother. Srila Sanatan Goswami compiled the Hari-bhakti-vilasa and published it in Srila Gopal Bhatta Goswami's name. Rupa Goswami considered Gopal to be as dear to him as his own life and engaged him in the deity worship of Radha Ramana.

Srila Gopal Bhatta Goswami became one of the Six Goswamis, but he always kept an attitude of meekness and humility. Thus, when Krishnadas Kaviraj approached him for permission to write the Chaitanya Charitamrita, he granted it, but under the condition that he not write about him. Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami could not go against the order of Gopal Bhatta and thus did nothing more than mention his name. Sri Jiva Goswami writes in the introduction to the Sat-sandarbha that he wrote it on the basis of an earlier text by Gopal Bhatta. Srila Gopal Bhatta Goswami also wrote a book called the Sat-kriya-sara-dipika ("Light on the essential sacraments for the Vaishnavas"). Thus his contribution to Gaudiya Vaishnava literature was in editing the Hari-bhakti-vilasa, preparing the notes for Jiva's Sat-sandarbha and in compiling the Sat-kriya-sara-dipika. He

also gave great joy to the community of devotees by writing a commentary on Bilvamangala's Krishna-karnamrta.

Amongst his disciples were Srinivas Acharya and Sri Gopinath Pujari.

It is said that Mahaprabhu had such affection for Gopal Bhatta that he sent him his own belt and kaupina as well as a wooden seat which he had used. These items are still worshiped in the Radha Ramana temple by the current sevaits.

Sri Sri Radha Ramana

When Srila Gopal Bhatta Goswami was visiting the pilgrimage centres of northern India, he found a Salagrama Sila on the banks of the Gandaki River. He took the worshipable stone and carried it with him wherever he went, treating it as Vrajendranandana Krishna himself. One day he thought that he would like to worship the Lord in a deity form so that he could expand his service. On the very next day, he found that the Salagrama Sila had transformed itself into Radha Ramana to fulfill the wish of his devotee. This deity stands alone without any form of Radha standing by his side. Instead, as a symbol of Radharani, a silver crown is placed on his left side.
The story is also told in the following way. It is said that Srila Gopal Bhatta Goswami used to daily worship twelve Salagramas. He developed a desire to serve the Lord in the form of a deity, thinking that in this way he would be able to worship him in a much better way. The Lord within his heart knew his feelings and through a rich merchant had many beautiful items used in the worship of the deity, such as ornaments and clothes, sent to him. Gopal began to worry that all these beautiful objects would be wasted because there was no way that he could use them unless he had a deity in human form. That night, he put the Salagramas to rest and in the morning he saw that one of them had been transformed into the Radha Ramana deity. When Rupa and Sanatan heard that Krishna had so mercifully appeared to Gopal Bhatta, they immediately came with the other devotees for darshan, and when they saw him, they were ecstatic with love. The annual festival commemorating Radha Ramana's appearance, when he is bathed publicly, takes place on the full moon day of Vaishakh. The Radha Ramana temple is considered one of the most important in Vrindavan.

Srila Gopal Bhatta Goswami ended his earthly pastimes on the Krsna Pancami of Asarh of 1507 of the Saka era (1585 AD). His samadhi temple is behind the current Radha Ramana temple. By reading Srinivas Acharya's hymn to the Six

Goswamis, Sad-gosvamy-astaka, we can understand their glories.

Srila Jiva Goswami

Srila Jiva Gosvami made his appearance in 1455, Sakabdha (1533 A.D.), on the 12th day of the bright fortnight in the month of Bhadra. He disappeared from view at the age of 85 in 1540 A.D., (Sakabdha, 3rd day of bright fortnight, Pausa).

As a child, Sri Jiva took up the worship of Sri-Sri Rama-Krsna Deities. Carefully decorating Them, and offering bhoga and arati, he served Them attentively. Even when playing, Jivas games were often connected with Lord Krsna's pastimes.

Sri Jiva studied under the local pandits, becoming proficient in grammar, poetry and rhetoric. Watching the expression of his great intellect, his teachers predicted that he would be a very saintly person. Later in his life, he composed a grammar in Sanskrit for the pleasure of the Lord. This composition described the rules of grammar, which was explained with examples that used the holy names of the Lord. Known as Hari-namamrta-vyakarana, this grammar is still current and is prescribed in the syllabus of schools in Bengal.

Once in a dream, Sri Jiva saw that Sri Rama-Krsna had taken the forms of Nitai-Gauranga, and they were dancing. Giving him the dust of Their lotus feet, the Two Lords then disappeared. This wonderful dream greatly consoled Sri Jiva, who was anxious to leave behind his family life and become absorbed full time in serving Nitai-Gauranga. But, being the only son of the family, and in the absence of his father, Jiva was responsible for the care of his mother. When he learned that his father had left his body on the banks of the Ganges, Sri Jiva became extremely saddened. Friends suggested that he go to Navadwipa to bathe himself in the coolness emanating from the lotus feet of Lord Nityananda Prabhu, so that burning grief in his mind and body might be refreshed. As Sri

Jiva headed for Navadwipa with a group of pilgrims, Nityananda Prabhu also set out for Navadwipa, from Khardaha. Arriving in Navadwipa, at the home of Srivasa Pandita, Sri Jiva met and fell down at the feet of Nityananada Prabhu.

Sri Jiva enjoyed various pastimes with Nityananda Prabhu, touring the nine islands of Navadwipa and taking darsana of the holy places of the Lord's pastimes. Jiva then traveled to Kasi (Varanasi), where he studied Vedanta under the instruction of Sri Madhusudana Vacaspati, a disciple of Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya. The conclusions of Vedanta contained in Srimad-Bhagavatam, as they were given by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu to Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya in Puri, had in turn been taught by the Bhattacarya to Madhusudana Vacaspati. Sri Jvia mastered these same conclusions from him.

Sri Jiva later traveled to Vrindavana, where he joined the company of his two uncles, Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatana. Jiva stayed with Sri Rupa, who taught him Srimad Bhagavatam and gave him mantra initiation. Sri Jvia quickly become conversant with the conclusion of Srimad Bhagavatam, so Sri Rupa engaged him in proof-reading his Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu. Sri Jiva compiled a commentary on Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu called Durgama sangamani. Later, in 1476 (Sakabda), Sri Sanatana Gosvami compiled Sri Vaisnava tosani, a commentary on the tenth canto of Srimad-Bhagavatam, which Jiva also proofread. Following Sanatana's instruction, in 1500 (Sakabda) Sri Jiva compiled a commentary on the Bhagavatam called Laghu Vaisnava tosani.

While in Vrindavana, Sri Rupa took up the service of Sri Sri Radha-Damodara. According to the Sadhana dipika, this Deity of Damodara was fashioned by Rupa Gosvami's own hand for his dear disciple, Sri Jiva. Today, Sri Sri Radha-Damodara are being worshipped in Jaipur, Rajasthan.

Srila Jiva Gosvami composed many literatures during his lifetime, including:

Hari-namamrta-vyakarana
Sutra-malika
Rasamrta-sesa
Gopala-virudavali
Sri-Madhava-mahotsava
Sri-Sankalpa-kalpavrksa
Brahma-Samhita-tika

Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu-tika (Durgama-sangamani)
Ujjvala-nilamani-tika (Locana-rocani)
Gopala-campu
Sat-sandharbha (Tattva-sandarbha, Bhagavata-sandarbha, Paramatma sandarbha, Krsna-sandarbha, Bhakti-sandharbha, Priti-sandarbha)
Srimad-Bhagavata-tika (Krama-sandarbha)
Laghu-vaisnava-tosani (Tenth Canto Bhagavatam commentary)
Sarva-sambadina (commentary on Sat-sandarbha)
Gopala-tapani-tika (Sri-Suhkha-bodhini)
Padma-puranastha-yogasara-stotra-tika
Gayatri-vyakhya-vivrti (A commentary on the Gayatri mantra as described in the Agni Purana, chapters 216-217)
Radha-Krsnarcana-candrika
Dhatu-sangraha
Bhavartha-sucaka-campu

Srila Narahari Sarkar Thakura

pura madhumati prana-sakhi vrindavane sthita
adhuna narahary-akhyah sarakarah prabhoh priyah

She who was previously Radha's intimate girlfriend named Madhumati is today Narahari Sarkar, the Lord's dear associate. (Gaura-ganoddesha-dipika 117)

Srila Narahari Sarkar Thakur is counted as one of Chaitanya's branches on the desire tree of pure devotional service. By Mahaprabhu's desire, he took birth in a physician (vaidya) family, blessing his family by so doing. He was the Lord's chief associate amongst the residents of the village of Srikhanda. The Srikhanda railway station is in Burdwan district four miles west of Katwa. Narahari's home is about one mile from the station.

Some of the other residents of Srikhanda who were devotees of Lord Chaitanya were: Sri Mukunda, Sri Raghunandan, Sri Chiranjiva, Sri Sulocana, Sri Damodar Kaviraj, Sri Ramachandra Kaviraj, Sri Govinda Kaviraj, Sri Balaram Das, Sri Ratikanta, Sri Ramagopala Das, Sri Pitambara Das, Sri Sachinandana, Sri Jagadananda, etc. Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami mentions many of these names as Chaitanya's branches that generously distributed the fruits of love of God. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 1.10.78-9)

The scholar Bharat Mallik has written the following Sanskrit verses about Narahari's appearance in a vaidya family in his book Candra-prabha:

shrikhanda-nama-nagari radhe bangeshu vishruta
sarvesham eva vaidyanam ashrayo yatra vidyate
yatra goshthi-bhuta vaidya yah khando'bhud bhishak-priyah
visheshatah kulinanam sarvesham eva vasa-bhuh

In Bengal, in the area known as Rarha (Burdwan, Birbhum), there is a famous town known as Srikhanda that gave shelter to all the physician clans. Since vaidyas gathered there, it became a favored residence for them, especially those who were of the most noble birth.

In the Gaudiya Vaishnava Abhidhana, it is stated that Narahari Sarkar Thakur appeared in either the Shaka year 1401 or 1402 (1479-80 AD). His father's name was Sri Narayan Das, his mother Sri Goyi. Sri Goyi was the daughter of Murari Sena. Narayan Das had three sons, Mukunda, Madhava and Narahari. Raghunandan Thakur was Mukunda's son.
(Bhakti-ratnakara 11.730-1)

The author of Chaitanya Mangala, Locana Das, who came from the village of Kogram, near Jhamatpur, was Narahari's disciple. For this reason, Locana Das writes that Srila Gadadhara Pandit Goswami and Narahari Sarkar Thakur were Mahaprabhu's dearest associates. On the other hand, in Chaitanya Bhagavat, Vrindavan Das Thakur has not spoken at any length about the devotees of Srikhanda.

Srila Locana Das Thakur has written the following about his guru in Chaitanya Mangala:

Narahari Das Thakur is my worshipable master. He possessed the power of the

pure lineage of a family of physicians. His body was permeated by love for Krishna, and other than Krishna-prema, he taught nothing to those who were his disciples. He was previously known as Madhumati, one of Radha's dearest sakhis in Vrindavan, a storehouse of sweetness. Now in the Age of Kali, with the appearance of Gauranga, he has become the keeper of the storehouse of love for Radha and Krishna.

After the death of his father Narayan, Narahari's older brother Mukunda arranged for him to study in Nabadwip. It is said that Mukunda sometimes worked as the Shah's family physician. Narahari quickly became very learned as well as a connoisseur of the flavors of devotional. Even before becoming Mahaprabhu's associate, he composed songs glorifying Radha and Govinda's pastimes. When Srila Gadadhara Pandit Goswami was constantly by the Lord's side, engaged in his service, Narahari had the good fortune to enter into his association. Narahari Sarkar Thakur's personal service was to fan the Lord with the yaktail whisk. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur, Mahaprabhu's personal representative, confirmed this in his Gaura-arati:

narahari adi kare camara dhulay
saïjaya, mukunda, vasu ghosha adi gaya

Narahari and the other residents of Srikhanda fanned with the camara, while Saïjaya, Mukunda and Vasu Ghosh sang.

Narahari wrote several books, including Bhakti-candrika-patala, Shri-Krishna-bhajanamrita, Shri-caitanya-sahasranama, Shri-Sachinandanashtaka, Shri-Radhashtaka, etc. All of these are well known and thought of highly by the devotees.

The following story is told about Narahari: Once when Mahaprabhu and Nityananda Prabhu came to his house in Srikhanda, they suddenly expressed a desire for honey. Narahari demonstrated his miraculous powers by transforming the water in a pond near his house into honey. He quenched the Lords' desire for honey with water from this pond, which has ever since been called Madhu-pushkarini. The Lord gave Narahari the order in a dream to install three deities of himself, which are currently worshipped in Srikhanda, Katwa and Ganganagara.

Narahari Sarkar Thakur also participated in the Lord's activities in Puri. He and

the other residents of Srikhanda would come every year with Shivananda Sena (Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.1.132). After his pilgrimage to South India, when he had saved so many people by giving them love for Krishna, Mahaprabhu returned to Puri whence Nityananda sent his servant Kala Krishna Das back to Bengal to tell everyone of the Lord's arrival. All the devotees immediately made arrangements to go to Jagannath Puri to see the Lord. The Khanda-vasis were amongst their number.

Mukunda, Narahari, and Raghunandan from Srikhanda arrived at Advaita Acharya's house to go to Nilachala.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.10.90)

After Jagannath's Snana Yatra, Jagannath would be unavailable for darshan. Mahaprabhu would go to Alalanath during this time in search of relief from the feelings of separation do to not being able to see Jagannath. When Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya asked Gopinath Acharya to identify the Lord's devotees, he mentioned the names of Narahari, Mukunda Das, Raghunandan, Chiranjiva and Sulochan.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.11.92)

During the Rathayatra festival, the Lord formed seven kirtan groups with the devotees from Bengal. One of these was composed uniquely of the devotees from Srikhanda. Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami writes that Narahari and Raghunandan were the dancers for this group, which sang separately from the others.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.13.46)

When the Lord gave all the devotees directions for service, he told Narahari to remain in the association of devotees.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.15.132)

Many people confuse the author of Bhakti-ratnakara, Narahari Chakravarti, with Narahari Sarkar Thakur. The former, who is also known as Ghanashyama Das, is a different person who was born in the district of Murshidabad. His father's name was Jagannath Chakravarti and he was a disciple of Vishvanath Chakravarti. On Govindaji's order, he was engaged as the cook for the Govinda temple and was known as the "cooking pujari" (rasuiya pujari) in Braj.

The following song was written by Narahari Sarkar Thakur:

aola gaura puna hi nadiya pura
hoyata manahi ullasa
aiche ananda kanda kiye heraba
karabahi kirtana vilasa

hari hari,
kaba hama heraba so mukha-cada
viraha payodhi kabahu dina pan raba
tutaba hridayaka bandha

kundana kanaka panti keba heraba
yajïa ki sutra viraja
bahu-jugala tuli hari hari bolaba
natana bhakata-gana majha

eta kahi nayana mudi bahu saba jana
gaura prema bhela bhora
narahari dasa asha kaba puraba
heraba gaura-kishora

If Gaura came back to Nadia town, my mind would be filled with joy. Then I would see him, the source of all joy, performing his kirtan pastimes.

Hari Hari! When will I again gaze upon that moon-like face? When will that day come when the dam holding the ocean of separation in my heart breaks?

When will I see the golden form of the Lord, wrapped in his yajïa-sutra? Lifting my arms in the air, I will shout “Hari! Hari!” and dance in the midst of the devotees.

Saying such things, many of Gaura’s devotees close their eyes and merge into love for him. When will Narahari’s desires be filled? When will he gaze again upon the form of the young Gaura?

Narahari disappeared in around 1540 AÒ. [Not according to his descendants, who say that he lived 100 years until 1578 or so.] in the month of Agrahayan on the krishna ekadashi day. Srinivas Acharya officiated at his funeral ceremony. Nityananda Prabhu’s son Virachandra Goswami and many other important

Vaishnavas were in Srikhanda to celebrate Narahari's disappearance feast, which is described in Bhakti-ratnakara:

Some people said, "Brothers! Do not leave right away. An ocean of prema will flood over in Srikhanda in a few days. On the thirteenth day of the waning moon of Agrahayan, when Narahari Thakur disappeared, a great festival will be held here."
(Bhakti-ratnakara 9.512-4)

Srila Paramgurudeva meets Srila Prabhupada

In the year 1925, Srila Paramgurudeva came to visit Mayapur for the first time with his childhood friend Narayan Candra Mukhopadhyaya and some other people. There they saw Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur and were attracted by his superhuman personality. Srila Prabhupada said during a lecture they attended that it was alright to visit the deity form in the temple, but that one had to learn to see it first. One cannot really see it with eyes that are blinded by material desire, but only with the eyes of love. On the same day, Dr. S. N. Ghosh and his wife were initiated by Srila Prabhupada.

After returning to Calcutta, Srila Paramgurudeva started visiting the Gaudiya Math on Ultadanga Road to hear Srila Prabhupada speak Harikatha. Understanding that through service to the Vaishnavas one could clear the road to the Lord and receive his mercy, or perhaps wishing to teach that same principle to the world, Srila Paramgurudeva sent much money and material for the Math without any fanfare. During this period, he also spent much time in studying the scriptures.

After hearing the Vaishnava doctrines from Srila Prabhupada, He became convinced of their reasonableness and superiority over other religious dogmas. He took shelter of Srila Prabhupada and on September 4, 1927, on Radhashtami, received initiation in the Holy Name and mantra at the Ultadanga Math. After initiation He was known as Hayagriva Das Brahmachari. Acharya Das

Devasarma was the officiating priest at the Vaishnava fire sacrifice.

Srila Prabhupada's departure as announced in Gaudiya magazine

Last Narayan 4, 450 of the Chaitanya era, at the end of the Thursday night, Paush 16, 1343 of the Bengali calendar, on Friday morning, January 1, 1937, the great acharya of the Gaudiya Vaishnava sampradaya and its only protector, the ninth in descent from Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the best of the followers of Svarupa Damodar and Sri Rupa Goswamis, Paramahamsa Parivrajakacarya Om Vishnupada Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada, joined the eternal activities of Radha Govinda in the first hour of their eternal twenty-four cycle of activities. This is the same hour that his own guru, Om Vishnupada Gaura Kisora Das Babaji entered into the nitya-lila.

The meaning of entering the lila at this hour is understood clearly by those who are intimate with him for it is directly experienced in their hearts, but a hint can be given here. At the end of the night, Radha and Krishna are locked in an unbreakable embrace, gadhaliigana-nirbhedam aptau. Jayadeva Goswami has indicated this situation with the word naktam in the first verse of Gita-govindam which begins meghair meduram ambaram. When Radha and Krishna are joined together like this, they take on their combined form of Gaurasundara. It is this auspicious moment that Varsabhanavi-dayita Das chose to make his entry into their pastimes.

Srila Prabhupada is like the sun of the Gaudiya sampradaya, as he is identical with its acharyas Rupa and Svarupa Damodar. But now that this sun of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's sampradaya has set, darkness has descended not only on the preachers of the Gaudiya Math, but on the entire world. It seems that the direct light of guileless devotion will once again be hidden from the view of the world's people. Our only hope is that this luminary amongst spiritual teachers sufficiently inspired his followers with such a desire to serve the feet of the Lord, with such ever-fresh enthusiasm, and instilled in them such ideals of practice and preaching, that the stream which passed through Svarupa and Rupa and then

through Bhaktivinoda Thakur will continue to gather force and flow into the world. In our hearts, we consider nothing else to be possible even in our worst imaginings. From the blessings that he gave just before passing on, we know that by adhering faithfully to his teachings and propagating them, we will be able to get his direct, personal association and will be able to find all the strength we need. Furthermore, by preaching fearlessly, with an independent spirit, and with the force of character that comes of sincere service and fidelity, we will be able to preach the gospel of Gaurasundara, our master's master, throughout the world. By so doing, we are assured that his blessings will continue to rain down on us even more profusely. This faith is the sole lampost illuminating the path of pure devotion, which is strewn with countless obstacles.
We, the Gaudiya's writers, are today without shelter, as we will no longer be able to show our articles to him who was the preserver of Rupa and Raghunath's tradition. Srila Prabhupada would eagerly read every article which was to be published in the Gaudiya. He would give us blessings and show the deepest satisfaction with our efforts. Now, even though he will no longer be able to do this directly, we will not be entirely devoid of his blessings nor of the spiritual strength arising from his mercy. We are not without succor, for he left us the gift of service to those who know the doctrines of pure devotion as taught by Bhaktivinoda Thakur, and through this service we shall gain the capacity to understand his most confidential desires and doctrines.

Srila Raghunandana Thakur

vyuhas tritiyah pradyumnah priya-narma-sakho'bhavat
cakre lila-sahayam yo radha-madhavayor vraje
shri-caitanyadvaita-tanuh sa eva raghunandanah

The third member of the catur-vyuha, Pradyumna, took part in Radha Madhava's lila in Vraja as Krishna's intimate friend or priya-narma-sakha. He has now appeared as Raghunandan, whose body is not different from that of Chaitanya.

(Gaura-ganoddesha-dipika 70)

Raghunandan's Father: Mukunda Das

Raghunandan was born into a family of physicians in the Shaka year 1432 (1510 AD). His father's name was Mukunda Das, his mother's name is unknown. Mukunda Das was Narahari Sarkar Thakur's older brother. In the fifteenth chapter of the Madhya-lila of Chaitanya Charitamrita, it is clearly said that Mukunda Das was physician to the king.

Externally, he appears to be a physician to the king who is engaged in government service. But internally, he is filled with divine love. Who would be able to know his love?
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.15.120)

Once when Mukunda Das was engaged in treating the king, he saw a peacock feather and fainted. This incident is also described in the Chaitanya Charitamrita (2.15.121ff). His home was in Srikhanda, a village in Burdwan district. On the Katwa-Burdwan rail line, the first station west of Katwa is Sripat Srikhanda, and the second Srikhanda. Mukunda Das's home is about one mile from the Srikhanda station. Raghunandan Thakur took birth on the Vasanta Panchami day. His uncle Narahari took a great deal of interest in raising Raghunandan, for whom he had much affection.

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu indicated that one's importance increases with the depth of devotion by telling Mukunda Das that his son was really his father.

The three most important devotees from Srikhanda were Mukunda Das, Raghunandan and Narahari. Mahaprabhu asked Mukunda Das, "Are you Raghunandan's father and he, your son? Or, is he your father and you his son? Tell me so that I can put my doubts to rest." Mukunda answered, "Raghunandan is my father and I am his son, rest assured. Whatever devotion we have comes from him, therefore I see him as my father." When he heard Mukunda Das's answer, Mahaprabhu was thrilled and he said, "He from whom we imbibe devotion is certainly our guru."
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.15.112-117)

Mahaprabhu Gave Raghunandan the Service of Deity Worship

Raghunandan’s work is to serve Krishna. He has no interest in anything other than serving Krishna.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.15.131)

From his early childhood, Raghunandan Thakur would feed the family’s Gopinath deity laddus. Uddhava Das has written a song in which this lila is described:
Mukunda Das lived in the village of Srikhanda, where his household deity was named Gopinath. One day he had to go somewhere for work and he called Raghunandan to do the service.

He said, “In this house we worship Krishna, so I want you to be sure to give him something to eat.” and then he left. Raghunandan did as his father had ordered and made the offering to the deity.

Raghunandan was just a child and in his simplicity, he said to Gopinath, “Eat! Eat!” Krishna is controlled by love, and so he did as the child told him and ate everything on the plate without leaving a grain of rice.

When Mukunda Das returned, he asked the boy to bring him the prasad from the offering he had made. The child answered, “Father, he ate everything and left no remnants.”

Mukunda was astonished at his child’s wonderful words that he asked him again on another occasion to make an offering. This time after he left the house, he returned and hid to watch what his son would do.

Raghunandan joyfully placed a laddu in Krishna’s hand and said in a commanding voice, “Eat! Eat!”. When Krishna had eaten half of the laddu, Raghunandan saw Mukunda Das in the doorway.

Mukunda saw that Krishna did not take another bite and that the half-eaten laddu remained in his hand. This caused him to be filled with love. He embraced his child and, as tears of joy rained from his eyes, spoke to him in a broken voice.

To this day, fortunate people come to Srikhanda to see the half-eaten laddu in Gopinath’s hand. Raghunandan is not different from Cupid himself, says Uddhava Das with great feeling.

[All the mahantas] felt fascinated to see the Gopinath deity whom Raghunandan had fed laddus. (Bhakti-ratnakara 9.525)

Other Miraculous Events

Narahari Sarkar Thakur gave mead to Nityananda Prabhu and Mahaprabhu from a pond which was right next to the their home. This pond became known as Madhu Pushkarini. The legend is told that a kadamba tree which grew right next to the pond always had two flowers blooming regardless of the season by Raghunandan's miraculous powers.

According to the Gaudiya Vaishnava Abhidhana, another miraculous event took place in Raghunandan's life: One day Abhirama Thakur came to Srikhanda and paid his obeisances to Raghunandan. Then he embraced him and melted with feelings of prema. Raghunandan started to dance and sing kirtan, and while doing so, one of his ankle bells slipped from his foot and went flying off, landing four miles away in Akai Hat near his disciple Krishna Das's house. Later, in order to commemorate the event, a tank was excavated there which was given the name Nupur Kund.

Mahaprabhu, the father of sankirtan, gave his adopted son Raghunandan Thakur the authority to offer the garland on the day before the sankirtan yajna (the adhivasa) and to make the final offering at the yajna's end.

Raghunandan Thakur accompanied the Bengali devotees to Puri ever year at caturmasya. He would dance with his uncle Narahari at the Rathayatra festival in the group formed by the residents of Srikhanda.

He participated in the Kheturi festival organized by Narottama Das Thakur, at Gadadhara Das's festival in Katwa and at the commemorative festival for Narahari Sarkar Thakur in Srikhanda.

Some people said, “Anyone who is dear to Raghunandan will win Mahaprabhu's mercy for life after life.” Others said, “Raghunandan is so merciful that he gives life to the most humble and fallen.” Some said, “What humility! There is no one who is his equal.” And others, “He is as beautiful as Kandarpa himself!”, etc. (Bhakti-ratnakara 9.660 ff.)

Srila Raghunandan Thakur had great affection for Srinivas Acharya. Prior to his disappearance he consoled Srinivas that despite the difficult times, he would be able to spread Vaishnavism in the future:

“A difficult time is coming in which people will succumb to various doubts. Narahari Prabhu wrote in his Shri-Krishna-bhajanamrita:

krishna-caitanya-candrena nityanandena samhrite
avatare kalav asmin vaishnavah sarva eva hi
bhavishyanti sadodvignah kale kale dine dine
prayah sandigdha-hridaya uttametara-madhyamah
(verses 3-4)

Once our Lord Krishna Chaitanya and his companion Nityananda Prabhu have ended their incarnation, the Vaishnavas in this age of Kali will be anxious with every passing day. Whether very advanced, somewhat advanced or neophyte, their hearts will nearly always be filled with doubt.

But don’t let this worry you. Lord Gauranga will accomplish many great works through you. I bless you that you remain long on this earth and that you and your followers protect our Lord’s religion. Those who are opposed to devotion to Krishna will become devotees by your influence and they will take shelter of you.
(Bhakti-ratnakara 13.174-179)

Raghunandan Thakur bequeathed the service of his Gaura-Gopal deity to his son Kanai Thakur and then left this world on the fourth day of the waxing moon in the month of Shravan. Kanai Thakur gave a feast as a part of his father’s last rites:

Raghunandan slowly became hidden to mortal eyes while repeating again and again the names of Sri Krishna Chaitanya. How glorious is that day of Shravan shukla caturthi! Who will not sing the glories of Raghunandan Thakur?
(Bhakti-ratnakara 13.183-4)

Srila Raghunath Das Goswami

dasa-raghunathasya purvakhya rasa-maïjari
amum kecit prabhashante shrimatim rati-maïjarim
bhanumaty-akhya kecit ahus tam nama-bhedatah

Raghnatha Das is ascribed three different names from his previous identity as a manjari in Krishna-lila: Rasa Manjari, Rati Manjari, and Bhanumati. (Gaura-ganoddesha-dipika 186)

Raghunath’s Childhood

Raghunath Das was born in around 1416 Shaka (1494 AD) in the town of Saptagram in Hooghly district. His actual birthplace was in the village of Krishnapura which is not far south of the current railway station name Adi Saptagram on the eastern bank of the ancient Saraswati River. Krishnapura is about a mile from Adi Saptagram station and approximately 1 miles from Trish Bigha station. [1]

Srila Raghunath Das Goswami was the son of Govardhana Majumdar. His mother’s name is not known. Govardhana’s older brother Hiranya had no male offspring. The two brothers belonged to the kayastha caste and were the primary landholders in Saptagram. In those days, the borders of Saptagram stretched from the Yashohara Bhairava creek almost up to the Rupa Narayan River. Raghunath lived in Saptagram Krishnapura, his uncle Kali Das, who was also Chaitanya Mahaprabhu’s devotee, lived in Shankhanagara. Raghunath’s family priest, Balaram Acharya and his guru, Yadunandana Acharya, lived in the town of Chandpura. Yadunandana was a intimate disciple of Advaita Acharya and a dedicated devotee of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu who had also received the special blessings of Vasudeva Datta Thakur.

After delivering the prostitute sent to tempt him by Ramachandra Khan, Hari Das Thakur left Benapole and came to Chandpura where he stayed with Balaram Acharya. Srila Raghunath Das Goswami was just a young boy at this time, but he had the opportunity to see Hari Das Thakur and receive his blessings. Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami says that these blessings were the cause of

Raghunath's later being able to attain the association of Mahaprabhu in the last years of his life.

Raghunath Das was just a little boy engaged in studies he had the darshan of Hari Das Thakur. Hari Das was merciful to him and this mercy was the reason that he later was able to attain the company of Lord Chaitanya.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.3.168-9)

Raghunath's Desire to Join the Lord

Hiranya and Govardhana Majumdar had an annual income of 800,000 rupees. At that time, a rupee could buy about 650 lbs of rice, which means several hundred times the value of a rupee today. Even though Raghunath was the only heir to this great fortune, he was indifferent to riches from his childhood. He had his first opportunity to see Mahaprabhu when the Lord came to Shantipur after taking sannyas. As soon as he saw the Lord, Raghunath fell to his feet in a transport of divine love. Raghunath's father, Govardhana Majumdar, always served Advaita Acharya with faith and devotion, and thus Advaita Prabhu was predisposed to show kindness to the young Raghunath. He thus made sure that Raghunath received the Lord's remnants for as long as he remained in Shantipur.

When the Lord departed for Puri, Raghunath returned to his home in Saptagram, but he had been transformed and was constantly feeling intense separation from the Lord. Seeing him in this condition, his father surrounded Raghunath by a guard of eleven men, including two Brahmins, four servants and five guards. Even so, Raghunath tried on several occasions to run away in order to join the Lord, but each time was caught and brought back before realizing his objectives. Raghunath became progressively depressed as a result of this situation.

In 1513, when the Lord made his attempt to visit Vrindavan, but only managed to get as far as Kanair Natashala, he returned to Shantipur and again stayed there for a short period of time. Raghunath wanted to see the Lord and this time begged his father to give him permission to go to Advaita's house. Govardhana was worried about the state of his son's mind and finally decided to let him go on condition that he return quickly. He also sent a large entourage of guards to accompany him.

When Raghunath saw the Lord, it was as though he regained a new lease on life. He told the Lord of the intolerable situation he was living and prayed to him to

tell him how he could break free from the bondage of his material existence. The all-knowing Lord could understand the depth of Raghunath's feeling and yet he tried to pacify him with the following instruction:

"Calm yourself and return home. Don't be foolish. It takes time to cross the ocean of material suffering. Don't make a show of "monkey renunciation" (markata-vairagya) simply for other people's benefit. Enjoy the worldly life in a moderate way without attachment. Be fixed on Krishna internally while externally dealing with the world in the appropriate fashion. It will not be long before Krishna delivers you." (Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.16.237-9)

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur has made the following comments on the word markata-vairagya: "To a superficial eye, monkeys are engaged in renunciation because they live naked in the forest without any fixed home. In fact, they are only interested in their own sensual enjoyment and have never given it up. Such show-bottle renunciation is called markata- vairagya, 'monkey-renunciation'. Real renunciation comes as a side-effect of pure devotion, and other types of renunciation which arise out of frustration with material pleasures or desires cannot last throughout one's life. Because of its temporary character, such renunciation is therefore called phalgu, or false. Such temporary renunciation, or monkey renunciation, is also known as shmashana-vairagya, 'the renunciation of the cremation ground.' [2]

"One may accept things which are absolutely necessary in order to serve Krishna without becoming absorbed by them or attached to them. If one lives in this way, he will not be under the influence of the karmic reactions resulting from the involvement with sense objects. In the Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu (1.2.108), it is said:

yavata syat sva-nirvahah
svikuryat tavad arthavit
adhikye nyunatayam ca
cyavate paramarthatah

One who knows his purpose should accept only as much as he needs to maintain his existence. If he accepts more or less than that, he will fall from the supreme objective.
Sri Jiva Goswami glosses the word sva-nirvahah in his Durgama- sangamani commentary with the words sva-sva-bhakti-nirvahah, i.e., a devotee should

accept only those material things that will help him render service to the Lord, according to his own individual needs. In the Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu (1.2.256), markata-vairagya, or phalgu-vairagya, has been more clearly explained as follows:

prapaïcikataya buddhya
hari-sambandhi-vastunah
mumukshubhih parityago
vairagyam phalgu kathyate

Phalgu-vairagya is defined as the rejection by one desiring liberation of something which is related to the Lord in the understanding that it is something material.
[As I have written in Vaishnava ke?]: Shri hari-sevaya jâha anukula, vishaya boliya tyage haya bhula-- “It is a mistake to renounce something which is favorable to the service of Lord Krishna, thinking it to be an ordinary material sense object.”

anasaktasya vishayan
yatharham upayuïjatah
nirbandhah krishna-sambandhe
yuktam vairagyam ucyate

Yukta-vairagya is defined as the attitude of one who is detached from the objects of the sense, but uses them only inasmuch as they have utility in the service of Lord Krishna.
[Once again, from Vaishnava ke?] asakti-rahita sambandha sahita vishaya-samuha sakali madhava --- ”All sense objects which are used without personal attachment and in relation to Krishna are identical to Krishna.” Taking Mahaprabhu’s instruction to heart, Raghunath returned home and gave up his feverish desire to renounce material life and instead engaged in his various duties with a sense of detachment. When his parents saw Raghunath abandon all the external signs of renunciation, they were delighted and they began to think that there was no necessity for such a tight guard around their son.

Hiranya Majumdar’s Tax Problems

In those days, there was an officer of the Shah with the title caudhuri or nayeb who acted as an intermediary between the Shah and the zamindars. He collected

taxes from the landowners and received a commission of 25% on them. Hiranya Majumdar, however, paid his taxes directly to the Shah, with whom he had a special agreement and thus cut out the middle man. Thus, on an income of 2,000,000 rupees, Hiranya was paying only 1,200,000 rather than 1,500,000, the difference which would normally have been paid to the caudhuri. Since he was losing a large amount of commission, the Turkish Muslim caudhuri became an enemy of the Majumdars. Ever since returning from his meeting with Mahaprabhu, Raghunath was practicing yukta-vairagya in accordance with the Lord's instructions. However, when he heard that Mahaprabhu had returned from Vrindavan, he started making preparations to join him in Puri. At that time, the caudhuri had started making complaints to the Shah about Hiranya and Govardhana out of anger at being cheated of his percentage of the tax revenue. Fearful of arrest, the two brothers had gone into hiding.

When the minister came to investigate the caudhuri's complaints, he arrested Raghunath, since his father and uncle were not present. The caudhuri came daily to rebuke and threaten Raghunath, asking him to reveal their whereabouts. Finally he decided to have Raghunath beaten, but when he saw his calm, lotus-like face, he was unable to continue. In fact, though he verbally chastized him, the caudhuri was afraid to cause him any real harm because Raghunath belonged to an influential family of the kayastha class. He knew that the kayasthas are intelligent and could plot against him, causing him worse problems.

Raghunath himself was looking for a way to extricate himself from the situation, and spoke to the caudhuri in a sweet voice: "My father and uncle are like your brothers. The behavior of brothers is difficult to understand--sometimes they fight amongst themselves, sometimes they are loving to each other. Today you are arguing, but tomorrow, I am sure that you will be reconciled with each other. I am your son as much as I am my father's and therefore you are my protector. It is not right for one such as yourself to punish his dependent. I need say no more, for you know the scriptures and are practically a living saint, a pir."

The caudhuri was affected by Raghunath's sweet words and began to cry as he was overcome by affection for him. He said, "From now on, I consider you to be my son. I will find an excuse to have you freed today. Have your uncle meet with me and make arrangements so that I can get my share of the revenues."

Thus Raghunath was able to mollify the caudhuri by his sweet and diplomatic behavior and bring the dispute between him and his uncle to an end. In the

meantime, Raghunath's father was making arrangements for his son's marriage to an extremely beautiful girl in order to insure his commitment to the family.

The Danda-mahotsava

A year later, Raghunath once again became anxious to see Mahaprabhu and repeatedly ran away from home in an effort to go to Puri. Each time, he was caught by his father and returned home. Raghunath's mother thought that her son was going mad and told her husband to place him under guard again. Govardhana responded in defeated tones,
"He has as much wealth as Indra, the king of the gods, and his wife is as beautiful as the heavenly courtesans. If these things have not been able to capture his spirit, then how will mere ropes be able to do so? The father who gives life to a child cannot interfere with the effects of his previous lives' actions. Sri Chaitanya Candra has given his blessings to this boy. Who can keep prisoner one who was been made mad by Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu?" (Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.6.39-41)

While Raghunath Das was devising a plan for how he would be delivered from his entanglements, he heard that Nityananda Prabhu had made an auspicious appearance in the town of Panihati. Thinking that Nityananda was the deliverer of the most fallen and that by his mercy he would surely be able to find his freedom, he went across the Ganges to Panihati where he found the Lord sitting under a tree on a wooden seat, surrounded by his associates. As soon as Raghunath saw him from a distance, he fell down like a rod. The merciful Lord Nityananda immediately had him brought close to him and, understanding the deep-rooted desires of Raghunath's heart, arranged for him to perform a service to the Vaishnavas so that he could realize them.

"Like a thief, you don't come near me, but simply try to run away. Now that I have caught you, I shall punish you. I want you to feed all my followers chipped rice and yogurt." When he heard Nityananda's command, Raghunath's mind was filled with joy. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.6.50-1)

The festival which Nityananda ordered Raghunath to put on is still celebrated as the Panihati Ciriadadhi Mahotsava. Nityananda Prabhu and a manifestation of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu himself celebrated the festival, eating on the banks of the Ganges just as though they were cowherd boys on the banks of the Yamuna River. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Nityananda Prabhu, their associates,

numerous Brahmins and countless men and women from the area enjoyed a feast of milk and chipped rice and yogurt and chipped rice. The opportunity to serve the Lord and his devotees in this way was something that could not come about except for some great fortune.

On the following day, Raghunath Das Goswami emotionally asked Nityananda through Raghava Pandit how he could possibly gain freedom from his material entanglements and find the association of Mahaprabhu. Like an ocean of mercy, Nityananda Prabhu placed his feet on Raghunath's head and said,

"You arranged this feast on the banks of the river and Mahaprabhu was merciful to you and came here himself to enjoy it. He blessed you by accepting the offering of chipped rice and yogurt. Then, after watching the devotees' dancing, he took prasad in the evening. Lord Gauranga came here just to deliver you and now he has removed any impediments which remained. He will turn you over to Svarupa Damodar and making you his confidential servant, he will keep you by his side. Go home now and forget your worries. You will soon be able to go to the Lord without any difficulties." (Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.6.139-143)

After discussing with Raghava Pandit, Raghunath gave a large sum of money as dakshina to be paid to Nityananda and his associates. He himself felt as though his life had been fulfilled after receiving Nityananda Prabhu's blessings. Upon returning to his house, he never again entered the inner quarters, but remained outside where he slept in the Durga Mandapa. Nevertheless, there was always a guard posted near him to prevent him running away.

Raghunath Escapes

Though Raghunath knew that the devotees from Bengal were preparing their annual trip to Puri, he was afraid of joining them because he knew that he would easily be caught. One day, about an hour before dawn, Yadunandana Acharya came by the house while Raghunath was sleeping on the Durga-mandapa. He told Raghunath that a disciple who performed the puja had abandoned his service and needed to be persuaded to take it up again as there was no replacement.

Raghunath accompanied his guru while all the guards were still sleeping. After walking a way with Yadunandana Acharya, however, Raghunath told him to return to his home, saying that he would go alone to the disciple's house and

convince him to come and perform his duties. He told him not to worry and bid him goodbye. With no guards or servants around him, Raghunath realized that he had a golden opportunity to make his escape.

Meditating on Mahaprabhu's lotus feet, he started to walk toward the east. He avoided the main roads for fear of being caught and even the smaller roads through the villages. Despite the difficult route through the jungle, he walked thirty miles on the very first day, finally taking rest in a milkman's cowshed that evening. The milkman saw that he had not eaten for the entire day and gave him some milk.

When Govardhana heard that his son had run away, he immediately sent a group of ten servants with a letter for Shivananda Sena who was already on his way to Puri with the devotees, telling him to send Raghunath back. They caught up with the group of pilgrims at a place called Jhankara, but were disappointed to find that Raghunath was not with them. Meanwhile, Raghunath was walking at great speed towards Puri, completely oblivious to his own fatigue and hunger.

Raghunath arrived in Puri after only twelve days, having stopped to eat only three times along the way and resting only infrequently. He came upon Mahaprabhu, who was sitting with Svarupa Damodar, and paid his obeisances to the Lord from a certain distance. Mukunda Datta informed the Lord that Raghunath had arrived and was paying his obeisances. The Lord told him to approach and Raghunath fell at his feet. The Lord embraced him, his heart melting with compassion for the exhausted young man. He said, "Nothing is more powerful than Krishna's mercy. It has dragged you out of the deep latrine hole of sense gratification." (Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.6.193) Raghunath answered the Lord mentally, thinking, "I know nothing about Krishna. I believe that it was you who pulled me out of that hole." Mahaprabhu's maternal grandfather, Nilambara Chakravarti knew Raghunath's father and uncle and used to call them bhaya because they were younger than he. They too called him dada ("older brother") because he was their elder and a Brahmin. Knowing that this relationship existed between them, Mahaprabhu joked with Raghunath, saying:

"Your father and uncle are like worms in the latrine pit of sense gratification. They think that the suffering which comes from sense gratification is happiness. Even though they believe in brahminical culture and contribute to it, they are not pure Vaishnavas, only imitation Vaishnavas. The nature of the sense objects is that they make one blind; they make one engage in activities which result in

material bondage. It is not possible to properly describe Krishna's mercy which has delivered you from such bondage." (Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.6.197-200)

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur has written the following about Krishna's mercy and the suffering caused by the poison of sense gratification: "Krishna's mercy is more powerful than the results of one's previous activities. It was this powerful compassion of the Lord which pulled Raghunath out of the latrine hole of sensual existence. A living entity who is attached to sense gratification does not have the strength to give it up. For the living being who has become a pure devotee of Krishna, however, sense enjoyments are like a ditch of stool. Mahaprabhu knew that Raghunath was completely free from any attachment to sense gratification. Nevertheless, he said this to him as a teaching to the conditioned souls." (Anubhashya 6.9.193)

"Sense objects (vishaya) bring great distress to their so-called enjoyer (vishayi). Even so, those whose brains are completely immersed in the objects of sense gratification and are entangled in the whirlpool of material existence consider these sources of distress to be happiness. The objects of material sense gratification should be discarded in the same way that one abandons an outhouse, and one whose mind is possessed by the desire for these objects of gratification is like a maggot who feeds off the stools in the latrine. This is how the transcendentalist sees the materialistic person who is trying to extract pleasure from inert matter. He has nothing but disdain for materialistic pleasures which he sees being exactly like the pleasure a maggot extracts from the taste of rotting excrement." (Anubhashya 6.9.197)

Raghunath's Renunciation

Mahaprabhu noticed that Raghunath was dirty and weak after his journey and so, after accepting him as his own son and servant, entrusted him to Svarupa Damodar, telling him take responsibility for him and to see to his well-being. He was thenceforth to be known as Svarupa's Raghunath to distinguish him from Raghunath Vaidya and Raghunath Bhatta, who were also living in Mahaprabhu's association in Puri at that time. The Lord also told Govinda to take care of Raghunath with great affection. He then told him to go and take his bath in the ocean and go to see Lord Jagannath, after which he was to join him for lunch. When Govinda gave Raghunath the remnants of the Lord's plate to eat, Raghunath was overjoyed.

Things went on like this for five days, Raghunath taking the Lord's remnants each day, but on the sixth day, he stopped taking the Lord's mahaprasada. From that day on, he went to the Jagannath temple and took darshan of the Lord's flower offering, after which he would stand at the Lion's Gate and beg maha prasad. At night, after they had finished their duties, Jagannath's servants would pass by on their way home and would customarily give prasad to any hungry Vaishnavas who waited there. In this way, renounced Vaishnavas could keep body and soul together. This type of renounced attitude was particularly noticeable amongst Mahaprabhu's devotees.

When the Lord asked after Raghunath and learned that he was no longer taking prasad in the same way as before, but begging by the Simha-dvara, he was satisfied to see that he was taking the renounced way of life so seriously. He said,

"That's very good. He is taking the life of a renunciate seriously. A renunciate should always be engaged in repeating the names of the Lord and should keep his body and soul together through begging. Anyone who takes the renounced order and then becomes dependent on others cannot achieve his ends and Krishna will ignore him. One who becomes a renunciate and then lusts for tasty foods will never attain his spiritual goal, and will simply become the slave of his tastebuds. A vairagi's duty is to always chant the names of Lord Krishna and fill his belly with spinach leaves, fruits and roots. One who runs here and there looking for good things to eat becomes attached to his sex organs and his belly and will never attain Krishna." (Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.6.222-7)

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur has underscored Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami's statement that the vairagi's only duty is to chant the names of the Lord. He has written the following: "Examining them impartially, both materialistic non-devotees and pure Vaishnavas can see that Mahaprabhu's associates are not attached to the gratification of their material senses. They are indifferent to anything which cannot be used in the service of Krishna. The reasons for such renunciation are incomprehensible to the ordinary materialistic person, for their service is without any external motive and it cannot be interrupted by any mundane impediment.When Lord Gaurasundara sees a devotee engaged in this kind of devotional service, completely indifferent to sense objects which are outside the scope of his service needs, he is greatly pleased with his clever attitude.

“The various rituals which are described in the Hari-bhakti-vilasa are meant for the wealthy householder and not for the vairagi who has renounced everything to take exclusive shelter of the Holy Name. One who chants the holy names in the morning, in the middle of the night, in the midday and at sunset, in other words throughout the day and night is certain to cross over the ocean of material existence. Those pure devotees who are fixed exclusively on the devotional service of the Lord and chant his names and remember him with love have no duty to perform other than kirtan and smarana.” (Anubhashya 3.6.223, translation of Hbv 20.366, 379, 382).

Srila Raghunath Das Goswami would never speak to the Lord directly, but asked Govinda or Svarupa Damodar to submit any question or request to the Lord on his behalf. One day he asked the Lord through Svarupa Damodar to instruct him personally on his duties. When the Lord heard this, he told Raghunath that Svarupa Damodar knew far more than he did and that he should take instruction from him about the goal of life and how to attain it. When Raghunath’s eagerness to hear from him directly did not abate, the Lord said, “If he has faith in my words, then let him follow these instructions:

“Do not listen to gossip nor engage in gossip yourself. You should not eat very palatable food, nor should you dress very nicely. Always chant the holy name of Lord Krishna without any expectation of honor, offering all respect to others. Mentally render service to Radha and Krishna in Vrindavan.” (Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.6.236-7)

The Bengali devotees arrived in Puri for Rathayatra and met Raghunath, who was particularly fortunate to receive Advaita Prabhu’s blessings. Shivananda Sena told him that his father had been looking for him. After staying four months in Puri, the devotees returned to Bengal and Shivananda gave news of Raghunath to Govardhana Majumdar, telling him of his determined ascetic spiritual practices. Raghunath’s parents were distressed to hear of his lifestyle and sent a Brahmin, two servants and four hundred rupees to Shivananda for Raghunath. The following year, Shivananda took these servants and the money to Puri with him and informed Raghunath that his father had sent them. Raghunath would not accept them, but thinking of his father’s benefit, he took some of the money and used it to pay for Mahaprabhu’s meals twice a month. After doing this for two years, Raghunath abandoned this practice also. In response to Mahaprabhu’s question about why Raghunath had stopped inviting him, Svarupa Damodar said that Raghunath had decided that since his father was

a materialistic man, Mahaprabhu was not really pleased to eat the food purchased with his money. By accepting such money his own mind was becoming contaminated and his only gain was some fame and status. Furthermore, he thought that Mahaprabhu was only accepting his invitations out of kindness because Raghunath was so foolish that he would be unhappy if he refused, but that in fact he was secretly not very pleased by it. Mahaprabhu was greatly satisfied to hear this conclusion and said,

“When one eats food offered by a materialistic person, one’s mind becomes contaminated. If the mind is contaminated, one is unable to remember Krishna. The food of a materialistic person is infected by the mode of passion and both the person who offers it and the one who accepts it are mentally contaminated. I accepted Raghunath’s invitation for many days because of his enthusiasm. I am glad that he has realized all this and given up this practice on his own initiative.” (Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.6.278-80)

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur has commented on the above events as follows: “People who are egotistical and possessive are generally materialistic persons who try to enjoy the world for their own sense gratification. Such persons see their money as a tool for achieving such sense gratification. If they attempt to serve the Lord, the guru or the Vaishnavas, who are beyond the material energy, their only gain will be an increase in material prestige and not the true benefits of such service. One who seeks true auspiciousness should therefore try to serve the Supreme Personality of Godhead by full surrender to his lotus feet and then engaging whatever money one has honestly earned in the spiritual service of Krishna, the spiritual master and the Vaishnavas, using his body, mind, words and heart.” (Anubhashya 3.6.275)

“Certain materialistic persons who are intoxicated by high birth, riches, learning or physical beauty, may make a show of deity worship, offer the prasad from that worship to Vaishnavas. Due to their ignorance, they are not aware that because they lack devotion, the Lord does not accept their offerings. Because of the taint of the sense enjoyer’s false pride which contaminates such offerings, it is often seen that the pure Vaishnava is indifferent to such apparent service to the deity. In other words, a pure Vaishnava who has renounced the life of sense enjoyment does not accept such service. Rich materialistic sense gratifiers are so foolish because of their sense of identification with the body and mind that they become angry with the Vaishnavas and offended by their behavior. (Anubhashya 3.6.276)

“Non-devotees and Prakrita-sahajiyas are considered to be materialistic, or vishayis. Because they offer food without devotion, an aspiring devotee will be contaminated by their association through eating their food. The result of such flaws in association (sanga-dosha), one will develop the same mentality as they. If one engages in even minimal association with materialists or Sahajiyas, who are materialists in the guise of Vaishnavas, through any of the six kinds of association (exchanging gifts, food or confidences), with even a drop of hidden affection, the result will be that the transcendental devotional service of Lord Krishna is transformed into sense gratification, and this will cause the aspiring devotee’s falldown. The conclusion is that one whose mind is fixed on the pleasures of the bodily senses and contaminated by the sense objects is too impure to be able to serve Krishna through the process of transcendental remembrance or smarana.” (Anubhashya 3.6.278)

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur has also written about the rajasika character of a materialistic person’s dinner invitations. He says, “Invitations to dinner are of three kinds, sattvika, rajasika and tamasika. The invitation of a pure devotee is in the mode of goodness, that of a pious materialistic person is in the mode of passion, while the invitation of a very sinful person is in the mode of darkness.” (Amrita-pravaha-bhashya, 3.6.279)

Raghunath Goswami’s asceticism grew stronger with each passing day. He stopped begging at the Lion’s Gate and started going instead to an almshouse. When Mahaprabhu heard this news from Govinda, he asked Svarupa Damodar what the cause was for the change. Svarupa Damodar answered that Raghunath was finding that a lot of time was being wasted standing in front of the Simha-dvara and was going to the almshouse every day at noon instead. Mahaprabhu praised Raghunath’s decision, saying, “Begging by the Simha-dvara resembles the behavior of a prostitute.” A prostitute stands around and waits for some man to come and give her some business, a beggar cannot remain indifferent as he waits for someone to be kind to him. Going for handouts at the almshouse does not present the same kind of problem. One simply has to go at the proper time and one receives enough to keep his body alive. This is useful if one wishes to use one’s time in chanting the Holy Names.

The sannyasi Shankarananda Saraswati sent Mahaprabhu a guïja-mala and a Govardhana-shila from Vrindavan. Mahaprabhu cherished the two objects, taking the necklace of guïja beads to be identical to Radharani and the stone from Govardhana to be identical to Krishna. Mahaprabhu would hold the

Govardhana-shila to his head, to his eyes and to his heart, and this would bring him great pleasure. After worshiping the necklace and the stone for three years, he decided one day to give them to Raghunath as a sign of his satisfaction with his devotion. Raghunath felt honored and delighted by the Lord's gift, and taking them to be the direct representations of Shri-Shri-Gandharvika-Giridhari, he worshiped them with water and tulasi leaves. When engaged in such loving service, he would go into a devotional trance. After his disappearance, the Govardhana-shila was placed in the Gokulananda temple where it is still being served.

It is said of Raghunath Das Goswami's ascetic vows that they were like lines drawn in stone. He spent 21_ hours a day engaged in chanting Krishna's names and in smarana, only one and a half hours for sleep and food. He only ate enough to keep body and soul together. He allowed no delicious foods to ever touch his tongue, and he wore only a piece of torn cloth and a quilt. Finally, he started going at night to gather the prasad which the vendors outside the temple threw away near the Simha-dvara after it started to go so bad that even the Tailangi cows would not eat it. He would wash it to take out the dirt with which it had become mixed until he reached the hard core of the grains which had not cooked. This is what he would eat, only adding a little salt. One day, Sri Svarupa Damodar Goswami saw Raghunath doing this and came and asked him for some of this prasad, comparing it to the nectar of the gods. Even Mahaprabhu, when he heard about it from Govinda, came and took a handful of Raghunath's prasad, though Svarupa Damodar prevented him from taking a second.

"What is this all about? You are eating such nice things and not giving any to me?" Saying this, the Lord snatched a morsel from Raghunath and ate it. As he was about to take another Svarupa Damodar caught Him by the hand and said, "It is not fit for you," and took it away from him. (3.6.322-3)

Srila Raghunath Das Goswami has himself summarized these experiences in his verses called Chaitanya-stava-kalpa-vriksha ("The desire tree of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's glories") which can be found in the collection called Stavavali.

maha-sampad-davad api patitam uddhritya kripaya
svarupe yah sviye kujanam api mam nyasya muditah
uro-guïja-haram priyam api ca govardhana-shilam
dadau me gaurango hridaya udayan mam madayati

By his mercy, Sri Gauranga took pleasure in delivering me even though I am a fallen soul, the lowest of men, from the blazing forest fire of great material opulence and entrusted me to his personal associate, Svarupa Damodar. He gave me the cherished guïja garland that he wore on his chest as well as his Govardhana shila. And now he awakens within my heart and makes me mad after him. (verse 11)
Raghunath Goes to Vrindavan

Raghunath remained under Svarupa Damodar's tutelage as long as he stayed in Puri, thus gaining direct access to Mahaprabhu's confidential service and association. In all, he remained there for sixteen years until the Lord and his chief confidant disappeared to the eyes of this world.

When this event took place, Raghunath felt that he could no longer live in their absence and decided to go to Vrindavan to commit suicide by jumping from Govardhana Hill. When he arrived in Vraja, he met Rupa and Sanatan Goswamis. They spoke to him for a long time and finally persuaded him not to put an end to his life. They adopted him as their third brother and kept him with them. Rupa and Sanatan were enriched by hearing the nectarean pastimes of Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu from Raghunath.

Raghunath Das Goswami's separation from Mahaprabhu and Radha-Krishna became so intense that he gave up eating solid food altogether, only drinking whey to sustain himself. He would pay a thousand prostrated obeisances, chant 100,000 Holy Names, serve Radha and Krishna mentally both day and night, recount the glorious pastimes of Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and bathe three times a day without fail in Radha Kund. This was the exemplary standard of bhajana set by Raghunath in which he served their Lordships for more than 22 hours a day, sleeping only an hour and a half, if at all.

Raghunath's renunciation may superficially be compared to that of the Buddha, but when examined more closely it will be observed that there are some unique characteristics in Raghunath's asceticism. The external meaning of renunciation is detachment from sense gratification, but its true meaning is attachment to the supreme person. Raghunath's strong attachment to the lotus feet of Radha and Krishna meant that he was completely and naturally detached from anything which was not connected to his worshipable lords.

Radha Kund

Sri Raghunath Das Goswami lived a long life. Srinivas Acharya had the chance to receive Raghunath's blessings before leaving Vrindavan to return to the East with the Goswamis' books. Srinivas was astounded by the powerful asceticism and deep absorption in love. Raghunath Das Goswami wrote three books: Stavavali, Shri Dana-carita (Dana-keli-cintamani) and Mukta-carita.

He lived in Radha Kund which was where he engaged in his most intense devotional practices. He was blessed there by Nityananda Prabhu's widow, Jahnava Devi, when she visited Radha Kund.

When Mahaprabhu himself visited the village of Arit and displayed his pastime of bathing in a rice field, by which he indicated the presence of Radha Kund and Shyama Kund. At that time the two tanks had not been excavated and finished with steps, etc. Raghunath himself thought it would be a good idea to have this work done, but had some reservations about getting involved in this kind of work. However, one day, a rich merchant who was on pilgrimage to Badari Narayan with the intention of donating a large sum of money to the temple there. But Badari Narayan appeared to him in a dream and told him to fund Raghunath's vision of a developed Radha Kund and Shyama Kund. The merchant came back to Vraja and found Raghunath in the village of Arit and recounted the story of the dream to him. Raghunath thus supervised the excavation of the ponds and the subsequent building of stone steps walkways.

Five trees stood on the banks of Shyama Kund which are said to be the five Pandavas. Raghunath had the intention of cutting down these trees so that Shyama Kund could be made perfectly rectangular. Before this could happen, however, Raghunath had a dream in which Yudhishthira appeared to him and told him that the five Pandavas were present in Radha Kund in the form of these trees. Raghunath immediately stopped the workers from cutting them down. This is why Shyama Kund was not built as a perfect rectangle.

Other Legends About Raghunath in Vraja

Another story is told about Raghunath Das Goswami. It is said that when he read Rupa Goswami's play, Lalita Madhava, he was submerged in an ocean of separation. Though he he was permanently in Radha's association at Radha Kund, he was unable to tolerate even a momentary threat of separation, what to speak of intense feelings of Krishna's absence. When he read the Lalita-

madhava, which has separation from Krishna as its primary subject matter, this mood became so strong that it became doubtful that he would be able to survive. When Rupa saw Raghunath's response to his play, he wrote another, short work named Dana-keli-kaumudi which is full of humor and amusing banter. He gave this book to Raghunath and took back his copy of Lalita-Madhava. When Raghunath read Dana-keli-kaumudi, he forgot his feelings of separation.

At first, when staying by Radha Kund Raghunath had no fixed shelter. He occasionally stayed with Gopal Bhatta Goswami, whose cottage was situated on the banks of the Manasa-Ganga in Govardhana. One day he took bath in the Manasa-Ganga and then went to sit under a tree surrounded by unkept thickets and began to worship the Lord in a devotional trance. While he was meditating, a tiger came there to drink water. Sanatan Goswami was also present there at the time and observed Raghunath as he remained unmoved even though exposed to such danger. He instructed Raghunath to build a cottage in which to live and engage in his devotional activities.

Srila Raghunath Das Goswami had special affection for a certain Vrajavasi whose name was Das. Raghunath's daily nourishment consisted of only a leaf bowl of whey. This Vrajavasi was distressed to learn that Raghunath ate so little, thinking that it was impossible for him to keep alive on such a small amount. One day when in the village known as Sakhisthali, he was overjoyed to see a silk cotton tree with huge leaves. He had a bigger sized bowl made with these leaves in which he put whey for Raghunath and then brought it to him. Raghunath was quite astonished to see such a large leaf-bowl and asked him where he got it. When he heard the name of Sakhisthali, he immediately threw down the bowl and the whey. Sakhisthali is the home of Candravali, Radharani's primary rival for Krishna's love. Candravali's sakhis like Shaivya and Padma are constantly looking for ways to take Krishna away from Radha's bower and bring him to that of their girlfriend. Just as Radharani is distressed by these actions, so are her girlfriends. Raghunath was a member of Radharani's entourage and so it was his role to constantly think of how to bring happiness to her and her girlfriends. As soon as he heard the name of Sakhisthali mentioned, he was transported by anger. This mood is the ultimate stage of love which envious people who are burdened by material lust could never understand. In the Bhakti-ratnakara, it is written,

After calming down, Raghunath said to Das, "That is Candravali's place. You shouldn't ever go there." Das Vrajavasi calmed down and recognized that these

were the symptoms of spiritual perfection in what was apparently a spiritual aspirant. All these devotees are eternally perfected souls. Anyone who doubts it must be considered fallen. (Bhakti-ratnakara 5.572-4)

There is one other extraordinary legend about Raghunath Das Goswami recounted in the Bhakti-ratnakara. One day he was suffering from indigestion. Vitthalanatha came with two doctors from Vallabhapura to cure Raghunath Das. After examining him, the doctors said that the indigestion had been caused by eating rice and milk. Vitthalanatha was astonished to hear this diagnosis and said, "This is impossible. This man never eats anything but whey." Raghunath then spoke up, saying that he had indeed eaten milk and rice in the course of his meditation on the pastimes of Radha and Krishna.

Sri Raghunath Das Goswami left his body on the banks of Radha Kund where his samadhi tomb stands. This took place on th Shukla Dvadashi tithi of the month of Ashvina, in the year 1586.

Srila Sanatana Goswami

ya rupa-manjari-preshtha purasiad rati-manjari
socyate nama-bhedena lavanga-manjari budhaih
sadya gaurabhinna-tanuh sarvaradhyah sanatanah
tam eva pravishat karyan muni-ratnah sanatanah

Rati Manjari, who was previously very dear to Rupa Manjari and was also known by some wise persons as Lavanga Manjari, has become the worshipable Sanatana, who is non-different from Gaura himself. The jewel amongst sages, Sanatana Kumara, has also entered into him to fulfill a certain mission. (Gaura-ganoddesha-dipika 181)

Sanatana's Life Before Meeting Mahaprabhu

According to the Gaudiya Vaishnava Abhidhana, Sanatana was born in around 1410 of the Shaka era (1488 AD). Narahari Chakravarti Thakur has described his ancestors in Bhakti-ratnakara (1.541ff) and Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur has given a summary of this information in his Anubhashya to Chaitanya Charitamrita (1.10.84), which we have quoted in this book on page 12 in our discussion of the life of Rupa Goswami. Other than this, no reliable information about their antecedents has been found. Perhaps researchers in Indian history will be able to shed more light on this.

According to the Gaudiya Vaishnava Abhidhana, the following brief account is given of how Sanatana's grandfather came to be engaged in the Muslim Shah's service: "During the reign of Barbak Shah (1460-1470 AD), Sanatana's grandfather Mukunda entered the court at the capital city of Gauda. Barbak Shah engaged many Abyssinian slaves and eunuchs in both his court and harem; they were known as habshi [which is now the common Bengali word for any black African]. After the death of Barbak Shah, his son Yusuf became king, and he was followed by his son Fateh Shah. During the reign of Fateh Shah, the Abyssinians led a coup in which Fateh Shah himself was assassinated. They ruled for five or six years. Hussein Shah was the wazir or prime minister of the last of the Abyssinian rulers and he later became himself ruler of Bengal. Mukunda left this world during the rule of Fateh Shah and Mukunda was engaged in his place. Sanatana managed to survive the Abyssinian period and during Hussein Shah's reign managed to take a higher position on the strength of his personal talents, eventually becoming prime minister. Rupa Goswami held another ministerial post, possibly as finance minister." Sanatana's title was Sakara Mallik and Rupa's was Dabir Khas.

While Sri Sanatana Goswami was still young, he studied under the country's leading scholar named Vidyavacaspati, learning many scriptures from him. He was especially attached to the study of the Srimad Bhagavatam. Although he had taken birth in a high class Brahmin family, because he had worked for the Muslim government, he considered himself to be fallen and always behaved in a most humble manner, as is appropriate for a Vaishnava.

Sanatana's teacher was Vidyavacaspati who would come to stay in Ramakeli from time to time. Sanatana studied all the scriptures from him. No one can achieve the depth of devotion that he had for his guru.
(Bhakti-ratnakara 1.598-9)

Sanatana's father would perform atonement rituals after even seeing a Muslim, yet Sanatana himself would associate constantly with Muslims. Being dependent on them for his livelihood, he would even go into their homes. For this reason, he considered himself to be on the same level as the Muslims and behaved very humbly. Sometimes, when he had fallen into the ocean of humility, he would think of himself as even lower than a mleccha. Because he had associated with Muslims and behaved in a lowly manner like them, he would speak of himself in that way. Though born in the highest class family of Brahmins, he never thought of himself as a Brahmin.
(Bhakti-ratnakara 1.609-14)

Through Ramananda [the Lord] destroyed Cupid's pride; through Svarupa Damodar he demonstrated detachment. Through Hari Das Thakur, he demonstrated forbearance and through Rupa and Sanatana Goswami, he taught humility.
(Bhakti-ratnakara 1.630-1)

All the participants in Krishna's lila also made their appearance in Gaura's incarnation in order to enrich his pastimes. Through them, the Lord gives various teachings to the people of this world.

Through Hari Das, he revealed the glories of the Holy Name; through Sanatana, the articles of faith in devotional service. Through Rupa he taught Radha and Krishna's pastimes of love. Who can understand the mysterious workings of the Lord?
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.5.86-7)

Through Sanatana's mercy, I learned the points of devotional doctrine, while through Rupa's mercy, I learned about the divine devotional sentiments.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 1.5.203)

Thus Sanatana has been called the bhakti-siddhantacarya, or the teacher of devotional doctrine, by which is meant the teacher of sambandha-jïana, or of the basic relations between God, man and the world. The founder of the Chaitanya Math, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur, whose various branches have spread throughout the world, mercifully gave his disciples a poem entitled "Who is a Vaishnava?" The nectarean instructions which are found in this poem mention the teachings of Mahaprabhu to Sanatana Goswami from the

Chaitanya Charitamrita.

tai dushta mana nirjana bhajana
pracaricha chale kuyogi-vaibhava
prabhu sanatane parama yatane
shiksha dila yaha, cinta sei saba

So, wicked mind, you have deceptively been preaching nirjana-bhajana, the practice of the eremetic life, which is nothing more than a display, like that of a misleading yoga practitioner interested in the mystic powers. Study the teachings of the Lord to Sanatana very carefully and meditate upon them.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur thus instructs us all to give great attention to the Lord’s teachings to Sanatana, or those teachings which he gave to the world through Sanatana Goswami.

First Meeting in Ramakeli

After Mahaprabhu took sannyas, he first went to Shantipur and then on to Puri and then on pilgrimage to South India. After completing his pilgrimage and returning to Puri, Mahaprabhu decided to go to Vrindavan via the route which follows the Ganges through Bengal. Great crowds of people accompanied him and he eventually decided to turn back from Kanair Natshala. He met Rupa and Sanatana for the first time while passing through the village of Ramakeli on this voyage.

Ramakeli is in the district of Maldah in West Bengal, about eight miles south of English Bazar, which was the district headquarters, and about five or six miles from the Maldah train station. It is also known as Gupta (“hidden”) Vrindavan. There are a number of sites which are worth seeing as reminders of Rupa and Sanatana: (1) A tamala and a kadamba tree under which Mahaprabhu is said to have been sitting when he met Rupa and Sanatana; a shrine containing the footprints of the Lord has been constructed there as a memorial of that meeting. The Lord distributed love of Krishna to all the devotees in this location. (2) The temple of Madana-mohana. This Madana-mohana deity was personally worshiped by Sanatana Goswami. There are also deities of Nitai-Gauranga and Advaita Prabhus. (3) There are several tanks, which are named Radha Kund, Shyama Kund, Surabhi Kund, Lalita Kund and Vishakha Kund. (4) A large man-made lake named Rupa Sagara, which is said to have been excavated by Rupa

Goswami, and (5) another named Sanatana Sagara. Rupa and Sanatana had large mansions built both in Ramakeli and Fateyabad.

At first, when the Muslim king heard that such great crowds of Hindus had assembled in the nearby village, he was worried. One of the Hindu members of the Shah's court was Keshava Khattri, who explained to him that there was no reason to fear Mahaprabhu. Rupa Goswami (Dabir Khas) also glorified Mahaprabhu to the king, telling him of his fortune in having the Lord bless the country by his presence. Keshava Kshatriya, meanwhile, sent a secret message to the Lord telling him to go elsewhere because the King could not be trusted.

The King said, "Listen, I am also beginning to think that this person must be God himself. There is no doubt about it." After having this conversation, the king entered his private quarters and Dabir Khas also returned to his residence. After returning to there, however, he and his brother decided after much consideration to go incognito to see the Lord. Thus, in the dead of night the two brothers, Dabir Khas and Sakara Mallik, went to see Mahaprabhu. First they met Nityananda Prabhu and Hari Das Thakur. Nityananda Prabhu and Hari Das then went and told the Lord that Rupa and Sakara Mallik had come to see him.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.1.180-4)

When Rupa and Sanatana met the Lord, they spoke to him with extreme humility:

"We two are millions of times more degraded, fallen and sinful than Jagai and Madhai. We are of wicked birth because we are the servants of Muslims and our activities are exactly like those of the Muslims. We constantly associate with people who are inimical toward the cows and Brahmins. Due to our abominable activities we are now bound by the neck and hands and have been thrown into the ditch filled with the excrement of evil sense enjoyment."
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.1.196-199)

It is very distressful to us that we are so unworthy, yet when we see your merciful qualities, we become desirous of attaining your blessings. This powerful desire rises up in us as that of a dwarf who wants to touch the moon.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.1.204-5)

When the Lord heard the extreme humility of the two brothers, he became compassionate and said to them, "You are my eternal servants. From now on you

shall be known as Rupa and Sanatana. I came to Bengal just so that I could meet you here in Ramakeli village. Krishna will deliver you from your entanglements very shortly."

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur has written the following comment in his Anubhashya (Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.1.208): "Mahaprabhu showed his mercy to Dabir Khas and Sakar Mallik by giving them the spiritual names of Rupa and Sanatana, respectively. Nama-karana is a type of samskara on the lowest level of qualification. However, those who ignore the mercy that is manifest in the spiritual name have no chance of attaining devotion to Krishna, but remain intoxicated with material prestige. The prakrita-sahajiyas pay no heed to the injunctions of the scripture which state that the minimum characteristics of a Vaishnava are that he wears the symbols of the discus and conchshell and urdhva-pundra (tilaka) and takes one of the names of Krishna. As such, they cannot be qualified as Gaudiya Vaishnavas. Non-Vaishnavas have not been given a name by the Vaishnava guru and so they continue in the bodily conception of life without any awareness of their relationship with the Lord. They continue to identify themselves with their previous caste according to the name which ties them to their body."

Amongst the Lord's companions present on this occasion were Nityananda Prabhu, Hari Das Thakur, Srivasa Pandit, Srila Gadadhara Pandit Goswami, Mukunda Datta, Jagadananda Pandit, Murari Gupta, Vakresvara Pandit and many others. The Lord had them all give their blessings to Rupa and Sanatana. As the Lord was departing, the worldly-wise Sanatana said to him,

You should leave this place, Lord. You have no business here. Even though the Shah has faith in you, he is a Muslim and cannot be trusted. To go on pilgrimage with such a large company of devotees is not recommended. You are going to Vrindavan with an entourage of hundreds and thousands of people, and this is not a fitting way to go on a pilgrimage."
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.1.222-4)

Mahaprabhu continued on as far as Kanair Natashala, but as he considered the wisdom of Sanatana's advice, he decided to turn back, first going to Shantipur and then to Puri.

After he and his entourage had given their mercy to Rupa and Sanatana, they left Ramakeli village.

(Bhakti-ratnakara 1.635)

Sanatana Escapes from Prison

Rupa and Sanatana are the eternal associates of Krishna in Vrindavan. They appeared in this world in order to enrich Lord Gauranga's lila by playing the role of aspirants for spiritual perfection (sadhakas). After meeting Mahaprabhu, they began to feel very impatient to change their lifestyle. They became very renounced and austere. In order to quickly be united with Mahaprabhu, they engaged two Brahmins in the performance of a purashcarana.

Srila Rupa Goswami finally resigned from his government service and he deposited 10,000 coins on behalf of his older brother with a grocer in the capital Gauda. Then he took the rest of their accumulated wealth with him to Bakla Candradvipa where he divided it up amongst the Vaishnavas, Brahmins and his family, while keeping a quarter of it with a trustworthy Brahmin against future necessity. He then sent two people to Puri to find out when Mahaprabhu intended to travel to Vrindavan.

Hussein Shah used to treat Sanatana Goswami as his younger brother and had great affection for him. Sanatana thought that the affection of the king, or indeed of any materialistic person, was a source of material bondage. If the king became angry with him, it would make it easier for him to break away from his entanglements. For this reason, he stopped performing his duties in the Shah's court, pretending to be ill. Though he claimed to be seriously ill, he was in fact engaged in an intense study of the Bhagavat with a group of Sanskrit scholars.

The Shah was disquieted by Sanatana's illness and he sent a doctor to examine him. The doctor came back and reported to the king that Sanatana was in good health and that he was studying the Bhagavat with a group of panditas. When he heard this, the Shah went to Sanatana himself and spoke to him very affectionately, trying to convince him to come back to work. Sanatana refused, however, to return to his ministerial duties and furthermore refused to accompany the Shah in the war he was preparing with Orissa. The Shah became suspicious of Sanatana and had him put in prison.

In the meantime, Rupa had received the news that Mahaprabhu had taken the jungle route through Jharikhanda for Vrindavan. He himself immediately departed for Vraja with his younger brother Anupama Mallik. He sent Sanatana

a letter telling him know of his intentions, telling him to take any necessary action to free himself and then to come and join them. The letter consisted of the following Sanskrit verse:

yadupateh kva gata mathura Pur
raghupateh kva gatottara-koshala
iti vicintya kurushva manah sthiram
na sad idam jagad ity avadharaya

Where has the Mathura of the Lord of the Yadus gone? And where is the kingdom of Koshala of the Lord of the Raghus? Contemplate this and make your mind steady: beware, this world will not last forever.
(Amrita-pravaha-bhashya, 2.20.3)

Sanatana was able to understand the secret meaning of the verse, which indicated that the Lord had gone to Mathura, and was overjoyed. He began to consider how he could escape from prison.

Sanatana knew the Muslim jailkeeper, for he was the one who had hired him. He began trying to persuade him to let him go, saying that the Almighty would surely bless and give him salvation for setting free someone who had been unjustly imprisoned. The jailor remained unconvinced, so Sanatana tried to win him over by reminding him that he owed him a favor for having given him the job.

When the jail keeper still refused to let him go, Sanatana offered him a bribe of 5,000 rupees. At this, the jailkeeper's resolve began to waver, but he was still afraid of being caught by the Badshah. Sanatana told him, "The Shah has gone to war. When he comes back, just tell him that I went to the toilet. Then when I went to the Ganges to wash myself, I jumped into the water and disappeared. Say that you looked everywhere but couldn't find me."

Sanatana further assured him that he would not remain in the area, as it was his intention to become a Sufi and go on the Haj to Mecca. Therefore, he need not worry on that account. The jailor remained reticent, however, and finally Sanatana had the grocer bring 7,000 rupees of the money which Rupa had left in his safekeeping and placed it directly in front of him. When he saw the money before him, the jailor became greedy and capitulated. He cut Sanatana's chains and helped him to cross the Ganges.

In general, we consider flattery, asking return for a favor, putting temptation before someone, telling someone to lie, and bribery all to be unethical acts. Sanatana, however, used all the means at his disposal to escape bondage so that he could join the Lord and engage in his service. To achieve an auspicious end, any means may be permissible. The purity or impurity of a particular means depends on the purity or impurity of the objectives to be achieved. In order to serve his master Rama, the Supreme Brahman, Hanuman burned down Lanka, killing many living beings. Because he was acting for the pleasure of the all-auspicious Supreme Lord, however, everyone was ultimately benefited by his action, and Hanuman is still considered worshipable to this very day. On the other hand, one could bathe in a holy river three times a day and worship the deity of the Lord, and be completely in the mode of ignorance if his objective is to do harm to other beings.

Even from the worldly point of view we see that one who commits murder is considered a criminal and is punished by the death penalty, but if one fights on the battlefield to save the nation and kills many members of an enemy army, he is not punished but rather decorated with medals. This is because he is not acting for personal ends, but for those of the collectivity. This is easy to understand, but when one acts, not for the limited purposes of serving the country, or even the entire world, but for the supremely auspicious owner of unlimited millions of universes, then that is the most justifiable of purposes and the highest benefits are attained by everyone through such actions. In the Padma-purana, it is written:

man-nimittam kritam papam api dharmaya kalpate
mam anadritya dharmo ‘pi papam syan mat-prabhavatah

Even sinful activities done for my sake are to be considered religious acts. On the other hand, pious activities done while disdaining me are considered to be sin. This is the extent of my power.

Those who chant the Holy Names or make a show of devotion, but in fact are seeking to achieve mundane, egoistic goals, are factually engaged in sin and are destined for a hellish fate. Krishna also states in the Bhagavad-gita,

yasya nahamkrito bhava buddhir yasya na lipyate
hatvapi sa imal lokan na hanti na nibadhyate

He who is free from egotism (arising from aversion to the Absolute), and whose intelligence is not implicated (in worldly activities)--even if he kills every living being in the whole world--does not kill at all, nor does he suffer a murderer’s consequences.
(Bhagavad-gita 18.17)

When causeless devotion is manifest in the soul and one’s heart has an honest eagerness to find service to the Lord, then one gives up all consideration for happiness in this world, for renunciation is a side effect of unmotivated devotion.

Ishana Nearly Gets Sanatana Killed

Sanatana had been prime minister, yet he escaped from jail with practically not a penny to his name. He did not take the main highway, but travelled as quickly as possible through fields and villages until he reached Pataria Mountain, which is part of the Raj Mahal Hills in the Chota Nagpur area in the state of Bihar. He did not know how to get across this mountain, and so requested the aid of a landowner who was also a robber chieftain. Accompanying Sanatana was a longtime personal servant named Ishana. Through the help of a palmist, the landowner was able to know that Ishana had eight gold coins in his possession, so he welcomed Sanatana into his home and treated him with great hospitality.

Sanatana was sufficiently experienced from his years in politics to become suspicious of the warm treatment he was getting from his host, and so he asked Ishana whether he was carrying anything of value. Ishana answered that he had seven gold coins, keeping his other coin a secret from him. Sanatana said, “Why have you brought this ruination upon us?” After gently chastising his servant in this way, he took the coins from him and gave them to his host, asking him to help him get across the mountain.

The landowner then revealed to Sanatana that he had known all along about the eight gold coins and that it had been his intention to murder them both that night somewhere on the mountain in order to take the money. He was very pleased that Sanatana had given him the gold and was even ready to return it to him, but Sanatana refused. He was intelligent enough to understand the adage: avyvasthita-cittasya prasado’pi bhayankarah, “even the kindness of an undependable person is dangerous.”

dhurtasya vacane kvastha kvacit satyam kvacin mrisha

kvacid raudram kvacid vrishtih shravanasya ghano yatha

How can one have faith in the words of a rascal? He sometimes tells the truth and sometimes falsehoods. Just as with the clouds of Shravan--sometimes there is sunshine and sometimes rain.

After they had crossed the mountain, Sanatana told Ishana to take the remaining gold coin and return home. Ishana had shown by his attachment to this gold coin that he was not yet ready to accept a life of renunciation, that he was too dependent on material conditions. When unqualified people take the renounced orders, then these orders themselves become contaminated. This is the lesson that Sanatana gave through his servant Ishana.

Sanatana Meets the Lord in Benares

After bidding good bye to Ishana, Sanatana continued on his way until he arrived at Hajipur on the northern bank of the Ganges near Patna. Sanatana's brother-in-law, Shrikanta, made his home there. Though Shrikanta invited him to stay there for a few days to recuperate from the voyage, Sanatana declined his invitation because of his desire to see the Lord. Shrikanta gave him a valuable blanket of Bhutanese wool.
Sanatana then continued on to Benares where he was overjoyed to learn that Mahaprabhu was staying at the house of the physician, Chandrasekhara. Sanatana did not go straight into Chandrasekhara's house but waited on his front porch. The Lord, the indweller of all souls, knew of his devotee's arrival and sent Chandrasekhara to the door to invite him in. As soon as Sanatana entered, Mahaprabhu immediately rushed to embrace him. The meeting of the Lord with his devotee affected them both so intensely that they were overcome by the transformations of ecstatic love. In his affection for Sanatana, the Lord started to brush off the dust accumulated on his body from his travels, but this caused Sanatana to feel uncomfortable. He told the Lord not to touch him, but the Lord answered,

"I touch you in order to purify myself. Your devotional force is so great that you can purify the entire universe. I look at you, I touch you and I sing your glories. By so doing, all my senses attain their most perfect use."
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.20.56,60)

The Lord repeated again and again that he was touching Sanatana for his own

purification and for the purification of the entire universe. Then he immediately added, “Listen Sanatana. Krishna is the ocean of mercy, he saves the most fallen. He has delivered you from the hell known as Raurava.” Sanatana is, of course, an eternal associate, so there is no question of his being truly fallen, but Mahaprabhu wished to make a point for the benefit of the people of the world. He wanted to teach that worldly honor measured in terms of one’s fortune and accumulation of sense objects is in truth misfortune, since the accumulation of material possessions for the sake of gross or subtle sense gratification ultimately leads to a hellish existence. Conditioned souls who are bewildered by the illusory energy are constantly busy working hard in order to accumulate wealth, position and influence, whether by fair means or foul. Seldom does one come across an exemplary householder who knows that Krishna is the only true enjoyer and engages all his worldly possessions in the Lord’s service rather than considering them to be the objects of his own enjoyment.

While Mahaprabhu was in Benares, he stayed with Chandrasekhara and took his meals at the house of Tapana Mishra. Mahaprabhu introduced Sanatana to these two devotees, and Tapana Mishra invited Sanatana to come to his house and take Mahaprabhu’s prasad remnants. After many days in prison and travelling, Sanatana’s hair and beard had grown long. The Lord told him to get shaved, so that he would look “respectable”. Vaishnavas in general are clean shaven, growing neither beard nor moustache. With the exception of the caturmasya period when one does not shave nor cut the fingernails, this is the accepted practice for Vaishnava men. Vaishnava sannyasis, however, usually shave only once a month on the full moon day, as for them to shave daily would be considered unnecessary preoccupation with the body.

After being shaved, Sanatana took his bath in the Ganges. When he came back to the house, Chandrasekhara wanted to give him a new cloth, but Sanatana refused it, taking back his old one. Though he had been rich enough to give clothes to thousands of mendicants, on this day he was reluctant to accept a new cloth for himself. When one’s desire to worship the Lord is real, one becomes indifferent to nice clothes or good food. Accepting gifts from Vaishnavas or taking their remnants is an exception to this rule, however, as these do not have the poisonous character that other sense objects have. Every single one of Sanatana’s actions contains a lesson for the conscientious sadhaka.

Mahaprabhu was extremely pleased to see Sanatana’s renunciation. Thus it is said,

mahaprabhura bhakta jata vairagya pradhana
yaha dekhi' tushta han gaura bhagavan

Renunciation is the predominating characteristic of every one of Mahaprabhu's devotees. When Lord Gauranga sees their renunciation, he is very pleased. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.6.220)

When one is intoxicated by material sensuality and enjoyments and engaged in competition to attain them, one is destined for a falldown from any spiritual attainment.

There was a Maharashtrian Brahmin who invited Sanatana to come daily to his house to eat for as long as he stayed in Benares. Sanatana refused, however, saying that he prefered to keep body and soul together by eating only madhukari, that is to say, by begging a handful of food from several houses each day. A pure devotee has no desire for bodily comfort.

Sanatana Goswami had torn his old cloth into two to make a loincloth (bahirvasa) and a shawl (uttariya), but even so, he continued to wrap himself in the Bhutanese wool blanket. Mahaprabhu looked repeatedly at this blanket, and Sanatana realized that Mahaprabhu did not approve of it. That day, when he went to the Ganges ghat, he saw a Bengali mendicant washing a quilt in the river. He offered him his expensive blanket in exchange for the quilt. When Sanatana came back wearing the threadbare quilt, the Lord was pleased.

The Lord said, "I had been thinking about this. It seems that since Lord Krishna is very merciful, he has cured you of your disease of attachment to sense enjoyment. Why then would he allow you to hold fast to a last bit of material attachment? After restoring someone to health, a good physician does not allow any trace of the disease to remain. It is contradictory to practice madhukari while wearing a blanket worth three gold coins. By so doing, you would have lost your spiritual strength and become a laughing stock."
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.20.90-2)

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is the Supreme Personality of Godhead himself. Even so, he played the role of the supreme teacher. He insisted that his personal associates maintain the standards of behavior that he set and himself followed.

I shall accept the role of a devotee and shall teach devotional service by practicing it myself. It is explained in the Bhagavat and the Bhagavad-gita that if one does not oneself practice a religious principle, it cannot be taught.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 1.3.20-1)

yad yad acarati shreshthas tat tad evetaro janah
sa yat pramanam kurute lokas tad anuvartate

The general masses imitate the ways of great men. They follow whatever the great personality accepts as the right conclusion.
(Bhagavad-gita 3.21)
The Lord's Teachings to Sanatana

Being pleased with Sanatana, Mahaprabhu infused him with spiritual power, giving him the capacity to ask appropriate questions about the practice of true spiritual life. Without the mercy of the Supreme Lord, genuine, honest questions on such matters cannot arise in someone's mind. Most people ask questions thinking that they already know the right answer, simply as a sort of debating technique. No spiritual benefit arises from such types of questions. Honest questions meant to find out doctrinal truths leading to surrender are called pariprashna ("relevant inquiry") in the Bhagavad-gita:

Tad viddhi pranipatena pariprashnena sevaya
upadekshyanti te jïanam jïaninas tattva-darshinah

You will be able to attain all this knowledge by satisfying the enlightened spiritual master with prostrate obeisances, relevant inquiry, and sincere service. Great souls who are most expert in scriptural knowledge and endowed with direct realization of the Supreme Absolute Truth will teach you that divine knowledge.
(Bhagavad-gita 4.34)

On the day a person undertakes his journey on the road to liberation, when his material entanglement is about to start the process of termination, he meets a spiritual master. Sanatana Goswami was himself an ever-liberated soul and a permanent companion of the Lord, but he showed what questions the aspiring practitioner of devotional service should ask his spiritual master on that day. He said to the Lord:

“I was born in a low family and have always associated with low-class men. I am fallen and the lowest of men. Indeed, I have fallen into the well of sinful materialism and passed my whole life there. I have no idea of what is beneficial for me and what is not. In ordinary dealings, people consider me wise, and I have also come to think of myself as such. You have mercifully delivered me from the materialistic path. Now, by the same causeless mercy, please explain to me my duty. I don’t know who I am or why the threefold miseries constantly wear me down, so how can I attain the highest good? Actually, I do not even know how to inquire about the goal of life and the process for obtaining it. Please be merciful upon me and explain all these things to me.” (Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.20.99-103)

Sanatana’s first question was ami ke? “Who am I?” This is the first question which arises in the heart of a person seeking the highest good. If one makes a mistake in assessing his true identity, then he will make errors when it comes to determining the ultimate goal of life. If one makes an error in determining the ultimate goal of life, then everything he does, every effort he makes, will be wasted. All of one’s duties, religious observations and self-interest rest upon the proper knowledge of oneself. If one takes the body to be the self, then he considers the maintenance of the body itself to be the goal of life or prayojana-tattva, and one’s self-interest will be the fulfilment of goals related to the body; duties will also be considered in terms of these ends, and morality, or the determination of good and bad, will all be determined on the basis of what is good or bad for the body. On the other hand, if someone takes the subtle body to be the self, then one will consider his personal interests in terms of its development and he will consider his religious duty to help others to develop in this way. Those who consider the self to be a soul which exists beyond the gross and subtle bodies will consider its development to be their self-interest and will consider it their religious duty to help other people to develop spiritually. Those whose vision is sufficiently clear to recognize their identity as spirit soul, but find themselves in the undesirable situation of bondage to the gross and subtle material bodies, still make favorable use of these coverings in an understanding of their true self-interest, which is that of the soul. They avoid the unfavorable use of the gross and subtle bodies.

In his teachings to Sanatana Goswami, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu taught that the living being’s true identity is to be Krishna’s eternal servant. The jiva is the Lord’s tatastha-shakti, or marginal energy, his separated expansion, who is simultaneously one and different from him. The Lord taught him the sadhya and

the sadhana, the goal of the seeker, and the methods by which the seeker achieves his goal. Mahaprabhu summarized the three elements of his teaching as the sambandha, saying that it was Krishna, the abhidheya, the practice which leads to perfection or devotion to Krishna, and the prayojana, the supreme goal of spiritual life or love for Krishna or prema.

The sum total of the Vedic literatures explains three things: sambandha, abhidheya and prayojana. The living entity's eternal relationship with Krishna is called sambandha. Devotional service is the process by which one attains the supreme objective, Krishna. Devotional service, or sense activity for the satisfaction of the Lord, is called abhidheya because it can develop one's original love of Godhead, which is the goal of life, the prayojana. This goal is the living entity's topmost interest and greatest treasure.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.20.124-5)

All these matters have been explained at great length, with copious quotations from scripture, by Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami in his Chaitanya Charitamrita, from the 20th to the 23rd chapters of the Madhya-lila. Rather than repeat these teachings in detail here, which would lead to this account of Sanatana Goswami's life becoming over long, we will limit ourselves to a brief summary.

Mahaprabhu told Sanatana that the various scriptures, in particular, the Shruti, contain statements which indicate that the living being is both one with and different from the Supreme Lord. Different acharyas have put forth a variety of doctrines explaining the relation between this oneness and distinction, named advaita-vada, dvaita-vada, vishishtadvaita-vada, shuddhadvaita-vada, dvaitadvaita-vada, etc.. If one accepts the scripture, one must accept it in its entirety, including both types of affirmation, and try to find a way to harmonize the apparent contradictions. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's solution to the problem was to establish the doctrine named acintya-bhedabheda, "inconceivable oneness and difference". This doctrine has been looked upon favorably around the world and created a revolution in thinking.

Mahaprabhu concluded his teachings with a discourse on the atmarama verse:

atmaramash ca munayo
nirgrantha apy urukrame
kurvanty ahaitukim bhaktim
ittham-bhuta-guno harih

Self-satisfied sages who are freed from any bondage also engage in the unmotivated service of Sri Krishna, whose activities are all wonderful. Such are the transcendentally attractive features of Hari!

Mahaprabhu gave eighteen different explanations of this verse from the Srimad Bhagavat to Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya. When Sanatana asked the Lord to allow him to hear them, Mahaprabhu treated him to 61 different interpretations.

Sanatana Goes to Vraja

After this, Mahaprabhu converted Prakashananda Saraswati and the other sannyasis of Benares to Vaishnavism. When he had completed instructing Sanatana in a most thorough fashion, he sent him to Vrindavan while he himself took the less frequented road to Puri. Sanatana took the main highway to Vrindavan where he met Subuddhi Raya who was following Mahaprabhu's instructions to atone for his past sins by chanting Hare Krishna. Though he was barely able to make a living selling dry wood, Subuddhi would provide for the Vaishnavas who came to Vraja from Bengal.
Sanatana took the pilgrimage circuit through the twelve forests of Vraja in the company of Subuddhi and the Sanoriya Brahmin. From them he learned that Rupa and Anupama had also completed the circuit not long before and had then taken the road along the banks of the Ganges to return to Bengal.

When Mahaprabhu himself did the Vraja parikrama, he discovered Radha Kund and Syama Kund near Arit village. Then he went to see the deity of Harideva at Govardhana after which he desired to see Giridhari Gopal. The Gopal deity of Madhavendra Puri had his temple on top of the hill. Mahaprabhu had vowed not to walk on Govardhana, but nevertheless wished to take darshan of Gopal. While he was wondering how to solve this problem, there was a panic in the area that the Muslims were planning to destroy images throughout Vraja and so Gopal's pujaris took him out of his temple and hid him in the village of Gatholi. Mahaprabhu then could go there and take his darshan. From time to time, Gopal would perform this pastime of being moved to Gatholi in this way. Sanatana also had the good fortune to be able to visit Gopal while he was there.

Sanatana Visits the Lord in Puri

It took Rupa Goswami longer to get to Bengal than he had expected and so he

was unable to join the other devotees on their annual trip to Puri to see the Lord. He therefore arrived some time after the main group and went to stay with Hari Das Thakur. When Mahaprabhu met Rupa, he inquired after Sanatana and heard from him that the brothers had taken different roads and thus missed each other. After touring Vrindavan, Sanatana Goswami took the Jharikhanda route to Puri. As a result of drinking bad water in the jungle, Sanatana came down with scabies. He became depressed as a result of the running sores on his body and in his despondency began to plan a suicide, thinking that due to his low birth and his now disgusting physical condition, he would not only be unable to go near the temple and see Jagannath, but would also be deprived of Mahaprabhu's darshan. He would not even be able to stay close enough to the temple to see it, and if Lord Jagannath's servants should accidentally touch him, he would commit a great offense. All in all, he thought it would be better to throw himself under the wheels of Jagannath's chariot and be crushed to death while watching Mahaprabhu dance.

When he finally arrived in Puri, he went directly to see Hari Das Thakur and paid his respectful obeisances to him and Hari Das affectionately embraced him. Sanatana then began to stay with him. Thus when Mahaprabhu came to see Hari Das, as he was wont to do, Sanatana had the opportunity to see him. The Lord was so overcome by divine love when he saw Sanatana that he approached with the intention of embracing him. Sanatana retreated, however, thinking himself too impure to be touched by the Lord. Nevertheless, Mahaprabhu would not let him escape and took him in his arms by force, holding him tightly enough that the fluid oozing from Sanatana's sores was smeared on his body, the sight of which broke Sanatana's heart. Mahaprabhu then gave Sanatana the news of Rupa's visit and Anupama's devotion to Rama and his departure for Rama's eternal abode.

On another day, the all-knowing Mahaprabhu came to Siddha Bakula where Hari Das and Sanatana stayed and suddenly confronted Sanatana with his intention to commit suicide during the Rathayatra festival. He said,

"My dear Sanatana, if I could attain Krishna by committing suicide, then I would give up millions of bodies without a moment's hesitation. But I cannot attain Krishna simply by giving up the body, but only through bhajana. There is no means other than devotional service by which to attain him."
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.4.55-6)

In this way, Mahaprabhu taught the world through Sanatana that suicide is an act of the mode of ignorance which cannot be used to attain Krishna. It is only through the cultivation of pure devotion in practice that one can attain the Supreme Lord. The best forms of bhajana, or worship, are known as the nine kinds of devotional service, or nava-vidha bhakti. The best of these is the congregational chanting of the Holy Names of Krishna, Harinama-sankirtana. Finally, Mahaprabhu revealed how dear Sanatana was to him when he said,

“You have already surrendered yourself to me, so your body is now my personal property. Why do you want to destroy another’s property? Are you unable to distinguish right from wrong? Your body is an important instrument of mine through which I shall accomplish many things.”
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.4.76-8)

During the Caturmasya period, many Bengali and Orissan devotees would come to Puri to be with the Lord, and that year they also met Sanatana. Sanatana was struck with wonder by the Lord’s dancing before Jagannath’s chariot. When the Bengali Vaishnavas returned to their homes after the four month period, Sanatana remained in Puri.

During the hot season, in the month of Jyestha, the Lord stayed with Gadadhara Pandit at Yameshvara Öota. One day, he called Sanatana to come and see him at noontime. Rather than taking the main road leading from the Simha Dvara to the seashore, Sanatana took another path which led across the hot sands of the beach. Though Sanatana had no consciousness of the burning heat of the sand, his feet were covered in blisters when he arrived.

The Lord asked Sanatana why he had not taken the path which led from the Simha Dvara. Sanatana replied,

“I have no right to pass by the Simha-dvara, for the servants of Jagannath are always coming and going there. Since they are always using that road, I would not be able to pass without touching them. If that should happen, I would be ruined.”
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.4.126-7)

Mahaprabhu was very pleased by Sanatana’s respect for Jagannath’s pujaris and by his humility. He answered him as follows:

“My dear Sanatana, you can save the entire universe and even the demigods and great saints are purified by touching you. Nevertheless, it is the characteristic of a devotee to observe Vaishnava etiquette. Maintenance of Vaishnava etiquette is the ornament of a devotee. One who transgresses these rules of behavior becomes a laughing stock and is lost both in this world and the next. By observing the etiquette, you have brought me great satisfaction. Who else but you will set this standard?”
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.4.126-7)

Mahaprabhu embraced Sanatana again and again, and once again, the oozing fluids from Sanatana’s blisters were smeared all over the Lord’s body.

Finally, Sanatana became so troubled by the situation that he went to discuss the matter with Jagadananda Pandit, asking him for advice on how to free himself from the offenses that he was unwillingly committing. Jagadananda suggested that Sanatana leave Puri and return to Vrindavan.

The next time that Mahaprabhu came to Siddha Bakula and embraced him, Sanatana blurted out his distress, saying that he should never have come to Puri as his coming had only resulted in his committing countless offenses. The contaminating impurities from his scabies daily touched the Lord’s body, plunging him deeper and deeper into misery. He begged Mahaprabhu for permission to leave for Vrindavan, letting him know that it was Jagadananda who had thus advised him.

When Mahaprabhu heard this, he became angry and said,

“Jagadananda is just a newcomer, a boy. Yet, he has become so proud that he thinks he can give even you advice. You are his guru in every respect, both in material and spiritual terms and yet he gives you advice? Doesn’t he know his own worth? You are my teacher; you are an authority. And yet, like an impudent child, he is giving instructions even to someone as qualified as you.”
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.4.158-60)

When Sanatana heard Mahaprabhu criticize Jagadananda in this way, he took it as another sign of the Pandit’s great fortune on the one hand and his own misfortune on the other.

“You accept Jagadananda into your inner circle while venerating me. It is as

though you were giving him ambrosia to drink and me the bitter juice of neem and tobacco leaves."
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.4.163)

Even after hearing these words, Mahaprabhu continued to take Jagadananda's actions as a sign of impudence. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur has written in this connection, "Everyone has a certain status. If someone thinks that he is more important than he really is, he transgresses the lines of etiquette which are prescribed by seniority, etc., and gives advice to someone to whom he should rather offer respect. Mahaprabhu did not encourage such transgressions, but rather sought to discourage a younger devotee like Jagadananda from behaving in this way."

The Lord further prohibited anyone from looking upon Sanatana's body as material.

"You take your body to be disgusting, whereas I think that your body is like nectar. Your body is transcendental, never material, but you conceive of it in material terms."
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.4.172-3)

When Hari Das Thakur objected that the Lord was exaggerating out of his own mercy, the Lord laughed and explained to him and Sanatana as follows:

"My dear Hari Das and Sanatana, I think of you as my adopted children and of myself as your maintainer. The maintainer never takes seriously any faults of the maintained. I never think of myself as deserving of respect, but because of affection I always consider you to be like my little boys. Even when a child passes stool and urine that touch her body, a mother never hates the child. On the contrary, she takes much pleasure in cleansing him and takes his filth to be like sandalwood pulp. Similarly, I felt no disgust at being touched by the fluids oozing from Sanatana's itches."
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.4.184-7)

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu went on to say,

"The body of a devotee is never material. It is considered to be transcendental, full of spiritual bliss. At the time of initiation, when a devotee fully surrenders unto the service of the Lord, Krishna accepts him to be as good as himself.

When the devotee's body is thus transformed into ecstatic spiritual existence, he is able to render service to the lotus feet of the Lord... Krishna produced scabies on Sanatana’s body and sent him here to test me. Had I refused to embrace him out of disgust, I would certainly have committed an offense to Krishna himself. This is the body of an associate of Krishna. It has no foul odor coming from it. On the first day that I embraced him, I smelled the aroma of catuhsama [a mixture of sandalwood pulp, camphor, aguru and musk].”
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.4.191-7)

This time, when the Lord embraced Sanatana, the foul itches which covered his body immediately disappeared and his skin took on an effulgent golden glow.

Jagadananda and Sanatana in Vraja

Sanatana stayed a full year in Puri, after which Mahaprabhu told him to return to Vrindavan. He bid the Lord goodbye after the Òolayatra and took the jungle path to Vrindavan. Rupa Goswami joined him there not long afterward. When Raghunath Bhatta Goswami came to Vrindavan on Mahaprabhu’s order, he stayed with Rupa and Sanatana and daily recited the Bhagavat for them in a sweet voice.

Some time later, Jagadananda Pandit took permission from Mahaprabhu to come to Vrindavan. When he came there, he met Sanatana who was overjoyed to see him. The two of them went together on a tour of the twelve forests of Vraja. Sanatana encouraged Jagadananda to stay with him in Gokula where he was settled at that time. Even though they dwelt together, they ate separately. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur writes in his Amrita-pravaha-bhashya, “Sanatana had become habituated to the madhukari system and lived on a few pieces of bread each day. Jagadananda, however, could not live without eating rice, and so he went every day to a nearby temple to cook. In those days, even in the temples of Vraja, rice and dahl were not regularly offered to the deities.”

One day, Jagadananda invited Sanatana to eat with him. Sanatana desired to show the world the extent of Jagadananda’s devotion to Mahaprabhu. So when he came to eat Jagadananda’s offering, he wore around his head a saffron cloth which had been given to him by a certain Mukunda Saraswati. When Jagadananda learned that the cloth was not a gift from Mahaprabhu, he was so angry with Sanatana that he took the pot in which the rice had been cooking and threatened to hit him with it. He said,

“You are Mahaprabhu’s most important associate. No one is dearer to him than you. How could anyone tolerate you wearing another sannyasi’s cloth around your head?”
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.13.56-7)

Sanatana answered by praising Jagadananda’s exclusive dedication to Gauranga Mahaprabhu:

“Well said! It is clear, Pandit Mahashaya, that you are unequalled in your love for the Lord. Only from you could I have learned this lesson, for you alone have such solid faith in the Lord.. My purpose in binding the cloth around my head has been realized, for as soon as you saw it, I was able to witness the manifestations of your love for the Lord. A Vaishnava should not wear a red-colored cloth. I will give it to someone else, for I have no further need for it.”
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.13.56-61)

Jagadananda stayed in Vraja for two months, after which he was no longer able to tolerate being separated from Mahaprabhu. He took leave of Sanatana and headed in the direction of Jagannath Puri. As they bid each other goodbye, as gifts for Mahaprabhu, Sanatana gave him sand from the place where Krishna held the rasa dance, a stone from Govardhana, a garland of guïja berries and some dried ripe pilu fruits. Jagadananda gave all these gifts to Mahaprabhu upon his arrival in Puri; he and his devotees especially enjoyed the pilu fruits.

Sanatana’s Service to the Lord

Mahaprabhu gave Sanatana four responsibilities: (1) to preach pure devotional service by establishing the doctrines of pure devotion; (2) to discover and make known the various places where Krishna had his pastimes; (3) to establish the service of the deity of Krishna in Vrindavan; and (4), to establish proper Vaishnava behavior through compiling a Vaishnava rule book or smriti, and in this way make the foundations of a Vaishnava society.

“O Sanatana, you should broadcast the revealed scriptures on devotional service and excavate the lost places of pilgrimage in the district of Mathura. Establish the deity service of Lord Krishna in Vrindavan. You should also compile a scripture containing the rules of devotional practice and preach these practices.”
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.23.97-8)

In following the instructions to broadcast the revealed scriptures on pure devotional service and to establish the foundations of proper Vaishnava practice and etiquette, Sanatana wrote four books, all of which are considered to be jewels by the devotees. He wrote (1) a commentary on the Haribhakti-vilasa known as Digdarshani, (2) a commentary on the tenth canto of the Srimad Bhagavatam known as the Brihad-Vaishnava-Toshani, (3) Lila-stava or Dashama-carita, and (4) Brihad-Bhagavatamrita, to which he added a commentary. Mahaprabhu himself gave directions to Sanatana about the contents of the Hari-bhakti-vilasa, which is the smriti scripture, or rule book for the external practices to be followed by the devotees.

Sanatana spent a great deal of time searching out the various holy spots in the land of Vraja. He also established the service of the Madana Mohana deity. Srila Sanatana Goswami founded a math in Vrindavan at the place known as Dvadashaditya Öila. He first had a temple built there for Radha-Madana Mohana. It is said that a rich officer in the Sultan’s army named Krishna Das Kapura built the temple and a kitchen and financed an opulent standard of worship for the deity. He later became Sanatana Goswami’s disciple.

When Sanatana Goswami was staying in Gokula Mahavana, he saw Madana Gopal playing with a group of cowherd boys at Ramanareti. Narahari Chakravarti has given a beautiful description of this vision in his Bhakti-ratnakara:

O Srinivas, just look at this place. Sanatana Goswami used to live here. All the fortunate residents of Mahavana would be revitalized by seeing him. He joyfully lived in Mahavana looking upon his Madana Gopal deity. Madana Gopal enjoyed playing on the sandy beaches which line the Yamuna, known as Ramana Reti. One day he came to that divine riverbank with the children of Mahavana, himself taking the form of a cowherd boy. Sanatana watched him as he played various childhood games with the other children and thought, “This is no ordinary child.” When the children had finished playing and were leaving, Sanatana followed them. The child entered into the temple and when Sanatana followed him inside, he saw no one but the deity of Madana Mohana. He paid his obeisances to the deity and then returned to his own dwelling without saying anything to anyone. So this is how Madana Mohan showed himself to be under the control of Sanatana’s love. Sanatana’s wondrous character has thus filled the three worlds.

(Bhakti-ratnakara 5.177-186)

Sanatana's Glorious Pastimes in Vraja

Krishnadas Kaviraj Goswami has described in his Chaitanya Charitamrita how Rupa and Sanatana Goswami worshiped Krishna in the land of Vraja:

These brothers have no fixed residence. They spend each night beneath a different tree in the forest, one night under one tree and the next under another. Sometimes, they begged dry food from a Brahmin's house and sometimes cooked food like dry bread and fried chick-peas. This is how they have given up all kinds of material enjoyments. They wrap themselves in a quilt and wear noting but a piece of torn cloth, claiming nothing but a waterpot as a possession. They engage almost twenty-four hours daily in rendering service to the Lord by chanting the holy names of Krishna and discussing his pastimes or dancing in great jubilation. They spend only an hour and a half in sleep, and some days, when overcome by the love of chanting the Lord's holy name, they do not sleep at all. Sometimes they write transcendental works about divine aesthetics, and sometimes they listen to talks about Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu or spend their time thinking about the Lord.
(Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.19.127-31)

While staying at Cakratirtha near Govardhana, Sanatana would regularly circumambulate the mountain. As he grew older, he became too weak to walk these 14 miles on a daily basis without becoming excessively fatigued. One day, Gopinath himself came in the form of a cowherd boy to fan him when he became too tired from walking. After refreshing Sanatana in this way, the boy climbed onto the hill and brought down a stone marked with Krishna's footprint. He gave the stone to Sanatana and said, "You have grown old. There is no need for you to trouble yourself to this extent any longer. I am giving you this stone from Govardhana. If you circumambulate this stone, you can consider yourself to have circumambulated Govardhana itself." Then he disappeared. No longer able to see the charming form of the cowherd boy, Sanatana was overwhelmed with pain and began to cry. This story has also been told in the (Bhakti-ratnakara 5.728-741).

Cakratirtha is on the northern shore of Manasi Ganga. There is a temple dedicated to Cakreshvara Shiva, or as he is popularly known, Cakleshvara Mahadeva. Sanatana's bhajana-kutira was under a neem tree which stood in front

of this temple. Just north of this place is a temple which houses Gaura-Nityananda. Sanatana Prabhu's Govardhana-shila is currently kept in the Radha-Damodar temple at Radha Kund.

There are more stories about the glories of Cakratirtha. When Sanatana first came to this place, there were so many mosquitos that he was unable to concentrate while meditating on the Holy Name or writing transcendental literature, so much so that he decided to move. That night, Cakreshvara appeared to Sanatana in a dream and told him not to worry about the problem. He would be able to engage in his worship without disturbance. From that night on, there were no more mosquitos at Cakratirtha.

Srila Sanatana Goswami also spent some time living in a cottage on the banks of Pavana Sarovara near Nandagrama. Here also he was granted a vision of Krishna as a cowherd boy, who gave him milk and told him to build a hut and engage in his worship there. One day, Rupa invited Sanatana to come and eat with him. For this occasion, he wished to prepare sweet rice, but he did not have the necessary ingredients. Srimati Radharani took the form of a young cowherd girl and came to Rupa with milk, sugar, rice and ghee, in short, giving him everything he needed to make the preparation for Sanatana's pleasure. Rupa Goswami cooked the sweet rice and after offering it to the deity, gave the prasad to Sanatana. Sanatana found that after relishing the delicious sweet rice, he was overcome by uncontrollable waves of ecstasy. Suspecting that something unusual had taken place, he asked Rupa where the ingredients had come from. When Rupa told him about the little cowherd girl, Sanatana immediately realized that it had been Radha. Because Radha was their goddess and they were her servants, the proper relation of served and servant had been reversed. He therefore strictly forbad Rupa from accepting such gifts in the future.
(Bhakti-ratnakara 5.1311-30)

Another legend told about Sanatana is the following. Once there was a very poor devotee of Shiva, whose name, according to the Bhaktamala and Gaudiya Vaishnava Abhidhana, was Sri Jivana Chakravarti. Originally from the village of Manakara in Burdwan district in Bengal, he had spent many years worshiping Shiva in Benares, praying to him for wealth. Finally, one night Shiva appeared to him in a dream and told him to go to Sanatana in Vrindavan, for he was in possession of a great wealth which he would share with him.

The poor Brahmin immediately set off for Vrindavan where he found Sanatana

deep in meditation. However, when he saw the Goswami, thin and dressed in a dirty loincloth, he began to doubt that he could give him the desired riches. Even so, he told Sanatana about the dream. Sanatana heard the Brahmin and came back to external consciousness. He answered saying that he lived by begging a few crumbs from a number of different houses, how could he possibly give him the riches he desired?

The poor Brahmin was disappointed and turned away, thinking that perhaps the message Shiva had given him in the dream had just been an illusion. Meanwhile, Sanatana pondered why Shiva had sent the Brahmin to him. As he ruminated, he remembered a philosopher's stone that was lying in a pile of rubbish and had long since been covered in dust. As soon as he remembered the existence of this valuable jewel, he sent someone to fetch the Brahmin and told him to take the jewel from the rubbish heap.

When the Brahmin saw the touchstone, he was overjoyed and thought, now there will be no one as rich as I in the entire world! After walking some distance away, however, he began to wonder why Sanatana had completely forgotten about such a valuable possession. Indeed, if he cared so little for the philosopher's stone, he must have something even more valuable. Perhaps he had been cheated! He wanted to know what riches Sanatana possessed that he cared so little for the touchstone.

The Brahmin quickly ran back to Sanatana and expressed his doubts, asking him if he had anything more valuable in his possession. Then Sanatana told him that there was no greater wealth than love for Krishna and that material goods were insignificant and simply a cause of greater distress. The Brahmin then bowed his head and prayed to Sanatana to please give him the wealth which made him consider even a touchstone insignificant. Sanatana was moved by his prayer and mercifully bestowed upon him the riches of Krishna-prema.

Sanatana Goswami's samadhi tomb is found next to the old Radha-Madana Mohana temple in Vrindavan. He left this world on the full moon day of Asharh in the Shaka year 1480 (1558 AD).

Srila Vamsi Das Babaji Maharaj

This article has been written on the basis of ones which previously appeared in the old Gaudiya magazine and various statements made by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur and his disciples who knew Vamsi Das Babaji Maharaj personally. Srila Vamsi Das Babaji Maharaj appeared in the village of Majidpur in the Jamalpur district of Bangladesh, near the city of Jamalpur. Before the partition of India, this city was formerly in the district of Mymensingh. According to Sri Hari Das, his father's name was Sanatana Malobrahma and he was previously known as Bhairava.

Babaji Maharaj came to Nabadwip from East Bengal. He was a paramahamsa Vaishnava who acted in the manner of an avadhuta. The word avadhuta refers to one who has shaken off from himself all worldly feeling and obligation. He does not care for social conventions, particularly the varnasrama-dharma, i.e., he is quite eccentric in his behavior. Nityananda Prabhu is often characterized as an avadhuta. He lived there under a tree on the banks of the Ganges, demonstrating a very high standard of renunciation. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur was attracted by his Vaishnava behavior and his disregard for the rules and regulations of society at large, in the fashion of a paramahamsa avadhuta. He himself paid his obeisances to Babaji Maharaj from a distance, but did not allow his disciples to associate with him. For even though Babaji Maharaj was a paramahamsa Vaishnava, an ordinary beginner in devotional practice would likely misunderstand his indifference to the rules and regulations and end up committing offenses at his feet.

The primary purpose of the rules and regulations is to bring pleasure to Sri Sri Radha and Govinda. A practitioner who has not yet overcome his mundane conditioning may very well judge an advanced Vaishnava according to rules and regulations which were designed to help him advance to the next level of spiritual realization. If he measures a perfected soul by the standards which have been set for the beginner, there is a possibility of committing offenses which could result in fall down from the devotional path. It is said that Babaji Maharaj had two cloth bags. He kept his Nitai-Gaura deities in one, Radha-Govinda in

the other. He regularly worshiped them, taking them out of the bags and serving them mentally with mantras. Then, when he had finished, he would place the deities back in their bags. On occasion he would leave them outside the bags so that people could look at them. Once in a while, he would put tobacco in a hookah and offer it to Radha and Govinda from a distance, but not to Nitai-Gauranga. People would come with offerings of rice, fruits, vegetables, flour, bananas, etc., but Babaji Maharaj would ignore them. When he noticed an accumulation of these offerings, he would mentally give them to his deities and then distribute them to whomever happened to be present. What person could understand this kind of behavior? Babaji Maharaj only wore a kaupina, a strip of cloth covering his private parts. He left his hair and beard uncut and unkept. Yet he was tall enough to be able to pick fruits for his puja from high branches in a tree without making use of ladders or other paraphernalia. On one occasion, he fell from a tree and from that time on he took on the guise of a lame person.

Babaji Maharaj's teachings

Babaji Maharaj was normally occupied with his devotional activities; he minded his own business and spoke little. Many people would come to him; often they would ask him questions. If he took notice at all, he would sometimes answer indirectly, but mostly he remained silent. He would be observed talking to the deities, sometimes laughing, sometimes crying desperately. If he did give spiritual instruction, he would rarely cite scripture, but always spoke from his personal realization. In two or three short phrases, he was often able to make a deep impression on the listener. Once, he had a regular visitor who kept asking him, "How can we attain God?" Babaji Maharaj just remained silent, giving no answer to the questioner. One day, he suddenly looked at this visitor and asked him, "What do you want?" The fellow replied, "I want to find God." Babaji Maharaj answered in one word, "Cry."
Those who visited him reported the short answers that he gave to their questions. Some of these were noted and are given here.

Q: Baba, what should we do?
A: If you worship Nitai, you will get Gaura. All your unhappiness will disappear and you will experience the beginnings of real joy.

Q: How can one become free from the demands of the senses?
A: suniya govinda-rab, apani palabe sab, simha-rabe yatha kari-gan (Narottama Däs). "They will all flee at the sound of Govinda's name just as the deer flee at

the sound of the lion's roar."

Q: Baba, you find no happiness in this world, then?
A: There is no joy here, unless you worship Gaura-Nitai. That is our eternal world, while this illusion is your world. Your happiness in this world is like the laughing or crying of a dreaming baby.

Q: How can we recognize the blessings of Krishna or the Vaishnavas?
A: je kare tomara asa, tare koro sarva-nasa -- "You ruin everything for someone who aspires to attain you." kahake-o taka dey, kaharo taka nei -- "To some he gives wealth, while others are penniless." Toma sthane aparadhe nahi paritrana -- "There is no pardon for an offense at your (Vaishnava Thakur's) feet." How can you stop it? Who will deliver you? Who will understand me if I try to explain? I haven't got the slightest bit of attachment to the Vaishnavas.

Q: How will I attain Krishna's mercy?
A: If you cry, you will get his mercy. Who cries? If you cry with tears of love, you will get the Lord's mercy. Mukhe bali hari, kaje anya kari, prema-vari cokhe elo na -- "I recite the names of Hari, but I act otherwise. So the tears of love do not well up in my eyes."

Q: How can we be happy? In renunciation or in enjoyment?
A: There are saintly persons on the Sarayu who chant the names of Sita Rama. They are happy, they know no distress. Those who stay with King Duryodhana know no joy. Those who are with Yudhisthira are happy. Happiness and distress are brothers. Enjoyment and renunciation. Some people enjoy and some renounce.

Q: Have you ever been to Mayapur?
A: Yes. Some call it Mayapur, some call it Nabadwip. There are buildings all over the Mayapur temple site and the deity is worshiped under a neem tree. I once went to Mayapur with a torn wrapper and a waterpot. Sachinandana Gosai (Mahaprabhu) came and took my waterpot. I sat down and waited and a few minutes later Sachinandana Gosai came and gave it back. Then I came back here.

Babaji Maharaj's disappearance day was on the Sukla Caturthi of Shravan.

Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura

vishvasya natha-rupo'sau bhakti-vartma-pradarshanat
bhakta-cakre vartitatvat cakravarty-akhyayabhavat

Because he revealed the path of devotion, he is considered to be identical with the Lord of the Universe, Vishvanath; and because he was predominant in the circle of Vaishnavas, he held the title Chakravarti.

Vishvanath's Birth and Disciplic Succession

Vishvanath took birth in a family of Rarihiya Brahmins in the village of Devagrama in Nadia district in about 1560 of the Shaka era (1638 AD). Some others suggest 1576 (1656) as his year of birth. The Gaudiya Vaishnava Abhidhana identifies his father as Rama Narayan Chakravarti. His mother's name is unknown. He had two older brothers, Ramabhadra and Raghunath. His spiritual master was Radharamana Chakravarti, disciple of Krishnacarana Chakravarti. Krishnacarana Chakravarti was a disciple and, according to some, adopted son of Ganga Narayan Chakravarti. Vishvanath has summarized his guru-parampara at the beginning of the Rasa-païcadhyaya section of his Sarartha-darshini commentary on the Srimad Bhagavatam.

shri-rama-krishna-ganga-caranan natva gurun uru-premnah
shrila-narottama-natha-shrigauranga-prabhum naumi

In this verse, Radharamana Chakravarti's name is abbreviated as Rama, Krishnacarana's name as Krishna, and Ganga Narayan's name as Ganga. The word natha refers to Lokanatha Goswami, whose guru was Gauranga Mahaprabhu. Thus the entire disciplic succession of Vishvanath has been given in this one single verse.

Vishvanath's Studies and Writings

After completing his studies of grammar in Devagrama, Vishvanath went to Saiyadabad in the Murshidabad district to study devotional scriptures from his guru. According to the Gaudiya Vaishnava Abhidhana, Vishvanath was married. Although he was married according to the rites, he never showed the slightest attachment for family life. It is said that he taught his wife the Bhagavat, giving her a taste for its nectar, and instructed her to devote herself to the worship of the Lord before he left home.

Srila Vishvanath Chakravarti Thakur followed the example of Sri Rupa and went to live in Vrindavan where he could dedicate himself to the devotional life. As a result of his commitment to following the orders of his spiritual master, he received many blessings from him. These blessings took shape in his good fortune to be able to live in various spots in Vraja-dham and write a great number of books on Gaudiya Vaishnava subjects, which are considered to be a great treasure by those in the sampradaya. All his books and his commentaries on the Bhagavad-gita and Bhagavat are written in a Sanskrit which is clear and simple, but at the same time full of the nectar of devotion.

In the edition of the Bhagavad-gita published by the Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, the following points are raised under the heading, “A description of the commentary”: “In Gaudiya Vaishnava history, Vishvanath was the guardian and chief teacher of the middle period. Amongst Vaishnavas of our day, a saying has been preserved about three of his works: kirana-bindu-kana, ei tin niye vaishnava-pana -- Vishvanath’s resumes of Rupa Goswami’s Ujjvala-nilamani (Ujjvala-nilamani-kirana), Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu (Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu-bindu), and Laghu-bhagavatamrita (Bhagavatamrita-kana) are the source of transcendental joy for the Vaishnavas; studying them makes one a Vaishnava. After the disappearance of Mahaprabhu’s Vrindavan associates, Srinivas, Narottama and Shyamananda preserved the traditions and expanded the movement in Bengal. Vishvanath is the fourth descendant in the disciplic line from Narottama Das. Few acharyas of the Gaudiya Vaishnava school have been as productive as Vishvanath. Besides writing this large corpus of books, Vishvanath also made two other major contributions, both of which are related to preaching and kirtan.”

Rupa Kaviraj was excommunicated from Vaishnava society. He was the founder of an apasampradaya which taught that only renunciates were eligible to act as acharya, all householders are disqualified. He preached a distorted doctrine of raganuga bhakti which completely negates the value of vidhi-marga, minimizing

the importance of hearing and chanting. To the benefit of the general public, Vishvanath has argued against this doctrine in the Sarartha-darshini commentary on the Third Canto of the Bhagavat. Rupa Kaviraj holds that no householder can take the Goswami title. Vishvanath counters this proposition by stating, on the basis of scripture, that any member of a dynasty of gurus who has the proper qualifications is entitled to be called a Goswami, i.e., he can do the work of a guru or acharya. However, to call one's unworthy children Goswamis simply for the purpose of accumulating wealth and disciples is opposed to the scriptural conclusions and is to be considered unlawful, even if born in a family with a tradition of acting as gurus.

Vishvanath Chakravarti Thakur wrote Bengali songs under the pen-name of Harivallabha Das. Some people say that this name was given to him when he took the vairagi vesha. In all respects, Vishvanath is worthy of superlatives, whether in his expertise in philosophical discourse, his knowledge of the Vaishnava scriptures, or his poetic talent.

The following is a list of the books written by Vishvanath: (1) Vraja-riti-cintamani, (2) Camatkara-candrika, (3) Prema-samputa, (4) Gitavali, (5) Subodhini commentary to Alankara-kaustubha, (6) Ananda-candrika commentary to Ujjvala-nilamani, (7) a commentary on Gopal-tapani Upanishad, (8) Shri-Krishna-bhavanamrita, a maha-kavya, (9) Shri-Bhagavatamrita-kana, (10) Ujjvala-nilamani-kirana-lesha, (11) Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu-bindu, (12) Ragavartma-candrika, (13) Aishvarya-kadambini, which appears to have been lost, (14) Madhurya-kadambini, (15) Bhakti-sara-pradarshini, a commentary on Bhaktirasamrita-sindhu, (16) Ananda-candrika, a commentary on the Ujjvala-nilamani, (17) a commentary on the Danakeli-kaumudi, (18) a commentary on the Lalita-madhava, (19) an incomplete commentary on Chaitanya Charitamrita, (20) a commentary on the Brahma-samhita, (21) Sararthavarshini, a commentary on the Bhagavad-gita, (22) Sarartha-darshini, a commentary on the Srimad Bhagavatam.

He also wrote a number of small works which have been collected as Stavamrita-lahari: (1) Guru-tattvashtaka, (2) Mantra-datri-gurvashtaka, (3) Paramaguror ashtaka, (4) Paratparaguror ashtaka, (5) Parama-paratparaguror ashtaka, (6) Shri-Lokanathashtaka, (7) Shri-Narottamashtaka, (8) Shri-Sacinandanashtaka, (9) Shri-Svarupa-caritamrita, (10) Svapna-vilasamritam, (11) Shri-Gopaladevashtaka, (12) Shri-Madanamohanashtaka, (13) Shri-Govindashtaka, (14) Shri-Gopinathashtaka, (15) Shri-Gokulanandashtaka, (16)

Svayam Bhagavadashtaka, (17) Shri-Radhakundashtaka, (18) Jaganmohanashtaka, (19) Anuragavalli, (20) Shri-Vrindadevyashtaka, (21) Shri-Vrindavanashtaka, (22) Shri-Radhika-dhyanamrita, (23) Shri-Rupacintamani, (24) Shri-Nandishvarashtaka, (25) Shri-Govardhanashtaka, (26) Shri-Sankalpa-kalpadruma, (27) Shri-Nikuïja-virudavali, (28) Shri-Surata-kathamrita, and (29) Shri-Shyamakundashtaka.

His Student Baladeva

When Vishvanath Chakravarti Thakur was old and hampered in his ability to travel, the acharyas of the Ramanuja sampradaya in the Galta village of Jaipur attempted to convert the King of Jaipur to their school by denying that the Gaudiya school had any historical basis. They accused the Gaudiyas of not having a tie to any one of the four Vaishnava disciplic successions. They advised the King of Jaipur to take initiation from someone in the Ramanuja line. The King was confused by their arguments and asked Vishvanath, who was the most prominent acharya of the Gaudiya school at that time, to come to Jaipur and answer the questions posed by the Ramanuja group. Due to his advanced age, Vishvanath was unable to go, but in his stead he sent his dear student, Baladeva Vidyabhushana to defend the line.

One of the arguments of the Ramanujis was that the Gaudiya school had no commentary of its own on the Vedanta. Baladeva asked the accusers for some time -- seven days according to some, three months according to others -- to write a Gaudiya commentary on Vedanta. He was given the time and then he went to the Govinda temple and prayed to his guru and to the Lord to give him the power to write such a commentary. Govindaji's garland fell from around his neck and the pujaris placed it on Baladeva chest. Baladeva took this a sign that the Lord had given him authorization.

With the Lord's blessings, even the impossible becomes possible, and Baladeva undertook the writing of comments to the 500 sutras of the Brahmasutra, completing it in the limited time given him but without neglecting the aesthetic qualities of the Gaudiya tradition in any way. When he went to Galta, the scholars of the other sampradayas were astonished by the quality of Baladeva's commentary. Because Govindaji himself had ordered its writing, the commentary became known as the Govinda-bhashya. It was after completing this commentary that Baladeva received the Vidyabhushana title.

It is said of Vishvanath that when he wrote the Bhagavat, when it rained, water fell everywhere except the place where he was sitting. Thus, the ink did not run and the text remained intact.

Vishvanath established the service of Gokulananda, and the Gokulanandaji temple stands in Vrindavan. Vishvanath left this world in Radhakunda in ca. 1630 of the Shaka era (1708 AD). The tithi was either the Shukla or Krishna Païcami of the month of Magh.

Srimad Bhagavat Archana Vidhi

A matter of great pleasure for us. Today is the most welfare granting Appearance day, Utthan Ekadashi, of the present year, of the most worshipable Vaishnav Acharya Nitya Lila Pravishta Tridandi Swami Sree Srimad Bhakti Dayita Madhav Goswami Maharaj, the Founder of All India Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Math Organisation. On this auspicious day, his most competent disciple, present President Acharya of the Math Organisation Tridandi Swami Srimad Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaj has brought out a brief publication, ‘Sree Bhagavat Archana Vidhi’, from the printing press of the Math having edited the same himself.

In the auspicious beginning of the valuable publication are given the verses relating to mangalacharan, obeisances to the holy feet of Sree Hari-Guru-Vaishnavas and Sree Dham. Thereafter on the basis of the philosophy of most worshipable World Guru Prabhupad Nitya Lila Pravishta Om108 Sri Srimad Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur, the necessity of the worship, Sri Vigraha Tattva, the significance of worship and prayer, decision about the rights, the revealing of the service of the Deities in Sree Chaitanya Math, Sree Gaudiya Math & Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, philosophy of the service, offences, and some main topics about five kinds of worship of Sree Vishnu, are written in the book.

Thsese subjects are are necesary to be known by on ewho received diksha. After taht the procedure of worship is given. Tools of worship-Tulsi flowers - plucking procedure, purity of flowers, the awakening of the Bhagavat Vigraha and managal arotic, procedure relating to service of Bhog before noon-the worship of Sree Vigraha, Sree Guru, Sree Gauranga, procedure of the worship of Sree Radha Krishna. In Sree Purush Sukta mantra, sixteen kinds of worship of the Godhead and allied procedures of worship are given there. Then, Bhog Aroti at Noon, service of Sree Tulsi, Sankirtan befitting to Mahaprasad, Sandhya arati and performance of the night duties are given. At the end of all these procedures, Panchamrit Sondhan Amrit and the procedure of Prayog id described. Nearly all the matter to be known in respect of the worship of the Deities is contained, in brief, in this publication.

In the scriptures the great necessity of worship of the Mantra Devat by a person who has received Diksha from the sad-Guru is specifically mentioned. In the two chapters of Sree Hari Bhakti Vilas, which is the king of Smriti Shastras, with quoted Vishnu yamatah, it is given that Sree Gurudev should seriously examine the disciple for one year and read to him the 104 rules relating to Vidhi and Nished. Amidst them, the worship and the pastimes His Ishta dev, in the devotional practices of Sree Shaligram and sree Deities, should be made known to him specifically. In Padma Puran the everlasting worship of Shaligram shila is mentioned :--

Shaligram Shila Pujam bina yohashnati
kinchan, sa chandaladi vishtayamakalpam
jayate krimi// H.B.Vilas 5/222

Anyone who takes food without the worship Shaligram, he becoms chandal and worm and lives like this for a long tie.

It is saidin the Skand Puran:

gauravachal shinaggraibhidyate tasya vai
tanuh/ na matirjayate yasya shalgram shila
arohane // evam shri bhagwan sarvaih
shalgram shilatmakah/

dvijaih stribhishea shudraishea pajyo bhagavatah praih //

ii,-223-

It is written in Padma Puran that if the worship of Shalgram Shila has not taken birth in the mind of a person, his body should be smashed by throuwing it from the top of the mountain.

(A translation of Hari Bhakti Vilas edited by the great Poet Shri Shyam Charan shouldnbe seen).

As prescried, having received Diksha, those who are engaged in the worship of Godhead, all of them are entitled to the worship of Shaligram Shila as Godhead, whether they are Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya or Shudra.

Sree Sanatan Goswami in his commentary in respect of the sentence "Bhagavatah Paraih" in the said Verse 223, has written :--the meaning is as such, after receiving Diksha, as prescribed, one is entitled to the worship of Godhead, i.e. one who has got Diksha according to the rules and is engaged in the worship of Godhead, he is entitled to rthe worship of Godhead either one os a woman, shudra, etc, taht is the meaning i.e. a woman , shudra engaged in the worship of Godhead is entitled to the worship of Shaligram Shila, but without the engagement in the worship of Godhead, a brahmin has not got the right to worship Shalgram Shila. That is the opinion of all the sacred shastras.

Some show disrespect to worship having no faith in the significance of nam-Bhajan Philosophy and worship according to the Pancharatric system. In this context, Sree Jiv Goswamipad's Kram Sandarbha commentary is as follows :--

"Srinam is said to be significantly more powerful, because srinam is competent to bestow up to love of Godhead, as such, Srinam is considered to be significantly more powerful (In the way of worship). What is the necessity of getting Diksha in the mantras which have small powers? In its answer, it is said that by Shrinam attainment upto love of Godhead is achieved in the true sense in reality. There is no nenecessity of Diksha in various mantras. Even then, in order to reduce the variouc impulses of the jivas which take birth due to impure mind, bad nature and contact with other bodies in a naturak way, Maharishi Sree Narad , etc great men, have prescribed certai rules and procedures in the way of worship. When transgressing them, the way of soften those offences (Prayashchit Vidhi)

have been prescribed by the scriptures. As such, the performance of Mahamantra, Srinam, Diksha Mantra both are permissible.

(Bhagavat Gaudiya Sanskaran Tathya may be seen).

Sree Jiv Goswamipad has shown pertienlarl great necessity for following the way of worship by the house-holders, especially the wealthy householders, who have received Diksha. Then only in Kaliyugthe greatness of Kirtan will be established. Although, in Kaliyug the greatness of Kirtan will be established. Although, in Kaliyug, other devotional practices are obligatory, but devotional practice with kirtan is compulsory. Such principal must be followed.

Devotion is of innumerable kinds, but Sree Rup Goswami and his great followers Sree Kaviraj Goswami Chief vaishnava personalities, have established the greatness of these five kinds of Divine Love. “Company of the saints, Nam Sankirtan, listening to Srimad Bhagavatam, residence in Mathura and service of the Deities with faith. But “ek ang sadhe

kineka sadhe bahu ang /

ishtha haile upjai premer tarang//”

According to this statement for the rise of divine love the great necessity Bhajan with faith is a thoughtful subject. As wealth of Divine Love is the highest attainment, Sree Sanatan Goswami-pad had declared that only Nam Sankirtan is the most powerful and best means of acquaring the wealth of Divine Love. As such the ways of worshipshould be followed only with Sankirtan along with the asociation of Divine Love. ‘Vidhimarg is not capable of granting Vraj Bhav, as such the followers of Vidhimarg, sacrificing their independance, are admitted into Ragamarg’. These words of great persons are always to be kept in mind by those who desire to enter in the Ragamarg.

‘Pragunav Bhakta hridayam sukh vidrutam seyat’, ie. the learnt of a devotee melts in the transcendental Anand specifically owing to Divine Love.

The editor Pujyapad Tirtha Maharaj has beautified this publication in all respect by including many knowable themes for the worshipers. I with

folded hands solicit all the Vaishnavas, desirous of tasting the divine ras, to go through this ferocious book with great effort.

Sree Prem maya, Bhakti Shastri has worked day & night without rest for the publication of this book. The printing of this book has been done with great thrift, probably, the....

My request is that all the heartfelt male/female readers should themselves rectify any error/omission by virtue of their kindness and keep us tied with the rope of lasting gratefulness.

Sukriti is necessary for association

Whenever one acts in relation to the Lord or for the pleasure of the Supreme Lord, whether unknowingly or without proper understanding, then this is known as *bhakti-unmukhi-sukriti* - a pious deed that culminates in pure devotion. As the number of such pious deeds increase, in due course of time, one gets an opportunity to associate with a pure devotee of the Lord (sadhu-sanga). In the Brahad-naradiya Purana (4.33) it is said:

bhaktis tu bhagavad-bhakta
sangena parijayate
sat-sangah prapyate pumbhih
sukata'ih purva-sancitaih
(Hari-bhakti-vilasa 10.279)

This means that due to pious deeds accumulated in previous births, a living entity gets the association of a sadhu and in that association, learns to discriminate between good and bad. Those who are deprived of sadhu-sanga do not possess real knowledge and mistake sadhu for asadhu, sat for asat, and vice versa. Therefore, sadhu-sanga is essential.

It is not easy to get sadhu-sanga. As already mentioned, only when one has

accumulated Sukriti from previous births or this birth is one given an opportunity to associate with sadhus.

This is also described in Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu (1.4.15-16):

adau sraddha tatah sadhu-
sango 'tha bhajana-kriya
tato 'nartha-nivrittih syat
tato ninoha rucis tatah
athasaktis tato bhavas
tatah premabhyudaicati
sadhakanam ayam premnah
pradurbhave bhavet kramah

When a living entity accumulates Sukriti in large numbers, then that living entity develops faith (sraddha) in the Supreme Lord. In this verse, sraddha means *visvasa*, or firm faith. When one's faith in the Supreme Lord becomes firm, then by the influence of that faith, one practises the regulative forms of devotion under the guidance of the devotees of the Lord. Such a person gradually develops the samskaras or habits for liking the association of sadhus. Wherever he goes, he always yearns for sadhu-sanga. This is the reason why one person engages in much sadhu-sanga and another does not, even when presented with the opportunity to do so.

Supreme Lord and His Rasas

The all-powerful Supreme Lord possesses infinite opulences. There may be many small gods dependent upon the Supreme Lord, but the Supreme Lord Himself is never many-He is one. The wise should very carefully consider whether or not persons who have the capacity to observe the manifestations of the various opulences of the Supreme Lord (the spiritual energy, marginal

energy, material energy and other energies), should be considered to be more advanced and competent than those who cannot. In a rudimentary sense, the whole earth constitutes knowledge of some kind. However, those who are able to analyse and acutely observe this 'dirt' perceive definable characteristics and qualities and are therefore thought of as 'scientists'.

Similarly, 'spiritual scientists' can perceive the infinite opulences of the Supreme Lord. This type of perception is the king of knowledge. It should not be misconstrued that such persons are polytheists or that they promote the concept of many simultaneous supreme beings. The Supreme Lord, although being one, can perform pastimes or spiritual activities in an infinite variety of forms. If someone should say that He cannot do so, then it will be meaningless to call Him the 'Supreme Lord' or the 'All-Powerful One'. The Supreme Lord, although being one, exhibits differences according to His pastimes. He is known as Vishnu, '*ya idam visvam vyapnoti iti visnu*'. Vishnu is the complete substance. Demigods and demigoddesses, being expansions of His energies, are His subordinates and are not Vishnu. There is no duality in *Visnu-tattva*. However, there are differences in pastimes. The king in the court and the king in the harem are not two different kings. He can be seen at two places in two different manifestations. In his court he displays his majestic nature and in his chambers he displays his intimate nature. Similarly, the Supreme Lord performs infinite pastimes in infinite forms. He is Sri Narayana in His majestic aspect, Sri Ramacandra in His ethical aspect, Sri Krishna in His sweet amorous aspect, and Gaurasundara Sri Hari in His most munificent aspect. The mood of repulsiveness (bibhatsa-rasa) has been manifested in Lord Matsya. Fearsomeness (bhayanaka-rasa) and parental affection (vatsalya-rasa) have been manifested in Lord Nrsimha. Therefore, Matsya and other avataras display differences in pastimes. All twelve rasas (five main and seven secondary mellows or moods) are manifested in their complete form only in Sri Nandanandana Krishna. So, even though all the manifestations of the Supreme Being are one, the excellence of rasa is only fully realized in the original form of Nandanandana Sri Krishna.

siddhanta tastvabhede ' pi
srsa krsna svarupayoh
rasenotkrsyate krsna
rupamesa rasasthitih

(Bhaktirasamrta-sindhu 2.32)

'In principle, there is no difference between the forms of Krishna and Narayana. Still, owing to the superior nature of sringara or madhurya rasa (conjugal mellows), Sri Krishna's form exhibits excellence. Such is the orderly foundation of rasa'. On 23 Aug 08.

Swans and Ducks

This moving story is taken from the Holy Biography of Nityalilapravishta Om Visnupada Paramahamsa 108 Sri Srila Bhakti Dayita Madhava Gosvami Maharaja. In this anecdote, one Sri Kamakhya Carana Sen asks questions of his Guru Maharaja, Srila Bhakti Dayita Madhava Gosvami Maharaja, which led him to make a life changing decision. Sri Kamakhya Carana Sen is known today as His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaja, who is the narrator of this story. A full English edition of this biography will be available from GOKUL in the near future.

In this text, the title "Srila Gurudeva" refers to Srila Bhakti Dayita Madhava Gosvami Maharaja.

In 1947, Srila Gurudeva again visited Assam. He had gone there at the request of a householder devotee of Sri Gaudiya Math at Gowalapada (the headquarters of Gowalapada Mahakuma) named Srimad Radha Mohana dasa Adhikari. Accompanying Him on this journey were Srimat Krsnakesava Brahmacari, Srimad Uddharana Brahmacari, Sriman Madhavananda Vrajavasi and Srimad Ratharudha dasa Brahmacari. Srila Gurudeva and the other Vaisnavas stayed at the residence of Radha Mohana Prabhu. Religious meetings were organized at different sites throughout the city. Advocate Sri Ksiroda Sen presided over a special session of Hari-Sabha.

The local government pleader Sri Kamakhya Carana Sen, the pleader of Mecapada estate, Sri Priyakumara Guharaya and other prominent citizens were

also present. Sri Kamakhya Carana, the son of Sri Dhirendra Kumara Guharaya, met Srila Gurudeva for the first time at the residence of Srimad Radha Mohana Prabhu. Later, he became Sri Krsna Ballabh Brahmacari, and eventually Srimad Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaja. Sri Kamakhya Carana and His friend, Devavrata (Ravi) approached Srila Gurudeva with many philosophical queries. When Sri Kamakhya Carana paid obeisances to Srila Gurudeva, who was seated on His bed, he shuddered, experiencing the electrifying effect of the showering of His blessings. Sri Kamakhya Carana asked, "Repeatedly chanting the name of Hari, I often have the feeling that soon I will obtain darsana of Bhagavan, but as soon as the thought arises that I will leave my loved ones, I become afraid and I cease chanting. By what method can I continue to chant at such moments?"

Although the question lacked intelligence and depth, Srila Gurudeva endeavored to explain with the help of an example. He replied, "Some ducks were swimming in a pond which was foul and stagnant. With great glee they were living by eating snails, worms, prawns, etc., in that putrid environment. One day, they saw their cousins flying overhead in the azure sky. They were in all respects, from feather to size, very beautiful. The ducks on the pond reasoned that the handsome appearance of their cousins was due to the fact that where their cousins soared was a better place than their own pond. Then they felt sorry for themselves, thinking that if they could only go to that place, they too would become as attractive as their cousins. However, the birds in the sky were actually swans who were returning to Manasa Sarovara from the sea. Seeing the forlorn expression of the ducks, one of the swans felt pity for them, and circled downwards. The ducks were filled with a sense of awe upon seeing this majestic creature more closely. They prayed to be taken to the swan's abode. The swan said that it was for this very reason that he had descended from above to take the ducks away from that unhealthy, foul place. The ducks, however, replied that they did not possess the strength to fly far and high. Full of compassion, the swan suggested to the ducks that they climb onto his back. Upon hearing this, the ducks conferred with one another and then asked the swan whether or not they would find snails and worms in their new place of residence. The swan replied that such low creatures are not to be found in the Himalayan Manasa Sarovara. In that place, they live by eating the lotus flower. Speaking in chorus, the ducks wanted to know how they would therefore survive there. Unanimously, they decided not to go. It was the petty attractions of the pond that

held the ducks back. Analogously, it is the external gross creations of Maya and its attractions that act as barriers to our leaving this mundane world. Sri Bhagavan, uncontaminated by material attributes, is ever blissful and any place He is present becomes pure and sanctified. There is nothing in the place where He resides that is foul or temporary. Those who cling to the creations and manifestations of Maya can never reach the True Creator. Bhagavan and Maya are polar opposites. Man cannot become free from base desires without the help of sadhus:

tato duhsangam utsrjya
satsu sajjeta buddhiman
santa evasya chindanti
mano-vyasangam uktibhih
(Srimad-Bhagavatam, 11.26.26)

"The wise avoid the wicked and seek the holy. One who is holy, offering holy advice, cuts asunder the desires that create obstructions in one's spiritual life."

Srimad Radha Mohana Prabhu had taken diksa initiation from Srila Prabhupada. As Sri Radha Mohana Brahmacari, he had resided at the Math for a period of time. When he became a householder, he took the name Srimad Radha Mohana Adhikari. The residents of Gowalapada greatly respected him for his devotion and chanting. To them, he was known as "Radha Mohana da." He worked in the Records Office of the uncle of Sri Kamakhya Carana (Srimad Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaja). Being thus connected, and residing in the same village, Srimad Radha Mohana Prabhu had great concern for the spiritual advancement of Srimad Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaja. Mention should also be made that the devoted wife of Radha Mohana Prabhu was also very instrumental and made her valuable contribution in this regard. Radha Mohana Prabhu was the main source of inspiration behind Srimad Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaja's decision to join Sri Gaudiya Math, and as a result of this, he had to suffer taunts and criticisms.

Srila Gurudeva used to send letters to Sri Kamakhya Carana at the address of Sri Radha Mohana. In one letter, answering some queries of Srimad Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaja, Srila Gurudeva had advised Him to peruse the work of Srimad Bhaktivinoda Thakura known as "Jaiva Dharma." By reading this book, Srimad Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaja was able to set to rest any doubts He may have

had. Srila Gurudeva expressed the opinion that a government job would not be suitable for a person who had opted for the life of a monk, and who wished to follow the path of renunciation. The householder who chants the Name of Hari should always seize any opportunity to advance his spiritual life. Heeding these words of advice from Srila Gurudeva and finding it impossible to perform adequate bhajana in His present circumstances, Sri Kamakhya Carana resolved never to enter householder life.

Teachings of Srila Gurudeva

We should always remember that we belong to Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's school of thought. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu teaches us to love all human beings, nay even other living beings, seeing their eternal relation with our most beloved object of worship - Supreme Lord Sree Krishna.

2) How Prahlad Maharaj could stay in the most hostile atmosphere with calm and serene mentality, it should be thought over deeply. He never became unbalanced or lost his calmness of mind. We should try to adjust ourselves according to the environment; we cannot adjust the environment according to us. Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and our *Guruvarga* repeatedly advise us to go through the holy biographies of Prahlad Maharaj and Ambarish Maharaj.

3) Ecstatic feelings of Divinity are helpful to that extent when we have remembrance of Divinity. It is the devotional scriptural instruction to remember Sree Krishna always and never to forget Him. There are lists of positive assertions commandments and negative assertions prohibitions, to remember Krishna always and never to forget Him. This is the criterion to understand what you are to do and not to do. Although feelings of Divinity are helpful to some extent for remembrance of Divinity but this is not direct realization of the Divinity. If there be direct realization of Divinity, the persons who have got such

realization cannot live in this world. Gradual development of realization depends on the intensity of sadhan (Devotional practice).

4) Kapil Bhagawan in Srimad Bhagavat, 3rd Canto, clearly pointed out that real quality of a Sadhu is exclusive one-pointed devotion to The Supreme Lord. Without this no one can become a real Sadhu. Meera Bai has also substantiated this.

5) Any serious endeavor for eternal devotional benefit will be successful, if it is done by invoking grace of Divine Master, Revered Vaishnavas and Supreme Lord for the purpose of propitiating Them only and not for any other purpose. Any desire of mundane name and fame or for any other ulterior motive will frustrate our devotional, spiritual life. We should remember that teachings of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, *"Trinadapi Suneechena, Tarorapi Sahisnuna, Amanina Manadena Kirtaneeya Sada Hari."*

6) Repugnance to the service of Sri Krishna and his devotees is the cause of nescience. Nescience, i.e., ignorance is the cause of misidentification of self. Misidentification of self is the cause of material desires. Material desires are the cause of committing sins. Committing sins is the cause of suffering. So the root cause of suffering is averseness to serve Sri Krishna.

7) Everything depends upon the determination of self. If anybody realizes that the real self is neither the physical body, nor the subtle body, it is beyond these two, it is a particle of externally blissful principle, he will surely try for spiritual development. Therefore, if we sincerely want actual bliss, we should give up our arrogance that we can get it by our own efforts.

8) Lord Balram appeared in Kaliyuga as Nityananda Prabhu, Who is gracious to all fallen souls. If you pray to Him with sincere heart, all doubts and obstacles in your Bhajan will be removed.

9) Our minds are preoccupied with thoughts of the world. We cannot totally eradicate these worldly unholy ideas all of a sudden. It will take time. It depends upon the intensity of sadhan. Even Mahabhagwat Ambrish Maharaj could not remove worldly ideas in a day; he also could remove these ideas gradually. The more you will imbibe in your mind divine ideas, the more worldly ideas will be purged out. This is the only way, applicable to all.

10) There is no difficulty in the worship of Sree Krishna, as He is nearest and dearest. He is residing within our hearts. He does not see mundane merits. He sees the sincerity of our hearts whether we actually want Him or not.

11) Congenial association is a great factor in achieving enhancement in Bhajan. Uncongenial association diverts the mind of a practitioner. Under exceptional cases spiritually well-established people can perform Bhajan under any circumstances anywhere and everywhere. In this Kaliyuga congenial association is necessary for making progress in Bhajan. Thakur Bhaktivinode says, "I don't get strength in practicing Harinam (Sankirtan) alone."

The 1997 US Tour

of His Divine Grace Om Vishnupad Paramahamsa 108 Sri Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Gosvami Maharaja

by Akincana das and Lalita dasi

"Wherever we shall devote our energy, we shall go there. So, the wise, always devote their mind, intelligence, senses, words and everything for the service of Sri Krishna. Those Jivas are blessed who have the aptitude to serve Sri Krishna and Krishna Bhaktas." (B. B. Tirtha Maharaj)

Phoenix Part One:

1997 may be remembered in history for many reasons, but in the minds and hearts of His devoted disciples, this was the year that the most elevated, and most beloved President-Acharya of Sree Chaitanya Gaudiya Math, His Divine Grace Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj toured the Western Hemisphere for the first time. His Divine Grace Bhakti Sundar Narasingha Maharaj, Who

had visited these unworthy authors in the fall of 1995, had informed us, the devotees of Phoenix, Arizona, USA, that Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaj was preparing for His first trip outside of India in the near future. Anyone familiar with the bureaucracy of the Indian government will understand the difficulties involved in obtaining a visa. As a result of such obstacles, Maharaj's departure from India was continually delayed. Eventually, we were both surprised and delighted when we received a letter in late April of 1997, from Rashbihari das (director of the tour and intimate disciple of His Divine Grace) stating that Maharaj and His entourage would be arriving in the US within a few short weeks in mid-May. They would first go to Singapore, then spend a week in San Francisco and Northern California, after which they would come to Phoenix.

By Krishna's arrangement, we had met His Divine Grace in Calcutta, the day after Radhastami, in 1981, and had maintained contact with Him solely by mail since our return to the States in December of the same year. Now, as if in a wonderful dream, on May 27 of this year, we found ourselves waiting with other devotees at the arrival gate of Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport experiencing no small degree of eager anticipation and nervousness. It has to be admitted that after sixteen years, it was difficult to remember the sound of Maharaj's voice, or even His precise appearance. Throughout all these years, we had had only one photograph of Maharaj taken in the 1970's, as His Divine Grace was always reluctant to have His photo taken, owing to His deference for His Gurudev, and His extreme devotional humility. Now, as we saw Him coming down the ramp, accompanied by Rashbihari das, Bhuta Bhavana das and Madan Mohan das (exhalted devotees, all of them) we could feel the tears welling up in our eyes. At that instant, a glimpse into the meaning of the rasa of love in separation could be understood. We had been immediately attracted to Maharaj's Divine Personality upon our first meeting many years ago, and now the reason for that attraction flooded into our hearts. He had the appearance of an otherworldly ambassador who had come to fulfill the mission of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur.

Due to the unavoidable short notice of Maharaj's upcoming arrival, we did not, unfortunately, have enough time to prepare events of the scale appropriate to Maharaj's saintly status. Nonetheless, by the will of the Supreme Lord, programs

of varying sizes and atmospheres, some in homes, some in halls were arranged for virtually every day of Maharaj's ten-day stay in Arizona. Suffice it to say, due to His Divine Grace's inimitable spiritual potency, each of these programs was a great success.

For those readers fortunate enough to have had the pleasure of Maharaj's personal association, you will concur that He is extremely gentle and sensitive by nature in intimate situations, but when delivering lectures, He is transformed into a firebrand of Krishna's Shakti, His words like a volley of brahmastras hurled at a spellbound audience. With the exception of a handful of devotees, these audiences were largely people unfamiliar with Krishna consciousness, who came out of curiosity in response to an article in Phoenix's major newspaper. Many people of varying ages and backgrounds approached Maharaj for darshan before and after every lecture, in a very humble and deferential manner, knowing fully that they had experienced a taste of real spiritual rasa. As the disciples are always pleased when Sri Guru is pleased, we were very much enlivened to see Maharaj's obvious satisfaction.

Ornamenting the sublime lectures of Maharaj, the beautiful singing and mridanga accompaniment rendered by Bhuta Bhavana das made all who were present feel as if Sri Svarup Damodar Himself were personally present leading the Divine Nama Sankirtan of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. His vast repertoire of Hindi and Bengali bhajans never failed to create devotionally ecstatic feelings in the hearts of all participants. He is also extremely expert in preparing sumptuous prasadam, and when he was not leading kirtan, he was in the kitchen, chanting loudly as he tended to numerous preparations. The irrepressible and utterly dedicated Rashbihari das was continuously engaged during all of His waking hours (and there were indeed very few hours for taking rest) engaged in Maharaj's service by making all the necessary arrangements for the implementation of these uniquely spiritual events, and for all the travel plans for their tour across the US (assuredly no small feat). He gave us great insight into the activities of Maharaj in India, and shared many wonderful anecdotes with us. Madan Mohan das, a successful businessman in India, from very humble beginnings, was utilizing his God-given wealth in Maharaj's service by personally financing virtually the entire US tour. He spent all day performing

japa, when he was not serving Maharaj's needs directly. These three unique individuals, handpicked by Maharaj to accompany Him to this distant place, have profoundly influenced our devotional life, and become our dear friends.

On June 1st, His Divine Grace, out of His causeless mercy, performed the Harinam initiations of Ananta Krishna das, Sanatana das and our fourteen-year-old daughter, Vrinda-devi dasi. He also mercifully granted Diksha to Lalita-devi dasi who had originally taken Harinam from Maharaj in Calcutta in 1981. Maharaj performed puja to His Divine Master, Nityalilapravishta Om Vishnupad Paramahamsa Sri Srimad Bhakti Dayita Madhav Goswami Maharaj, in the kitchen of our small apartment with great attention and concentration, reciting divinely potent mantras for a long period of time very early in the morning. Maharaj during puja is very wonderful to behold. While giving japa mala instructions to the new initiates, Maharaj was equally meticulous and spoke elegantly, in a mood of intense spiritual concentration for the benefit of all that were attending the ceremony. Devotees from all over the state of Arizona came to witness the initiations, as well as some travelling devotees from Toronto, Canada. Afterwards, the most amazing Ekadasi feast was prepared by Bhuta Bhavana das.

Travels Through the Southwest:
During the following week, Maharaj demonstrated His unlimited compassion for the devotees by continuously travelling hundreds of miles throughout the extremely rugged terrain of Arizona, for the sole purpose of chanting Krishna's glories to all that requested the privilege of His Divine presence. Upon arriving at the home of Haripriya dasi in the very remote village of Pima in Eastern Arizona, Maharaj remarked that the surroundings reminded Him of Vrindavan as He pointed out the thick vegetation, the dirt paths, the simple style house and the view of the nearby Mount Graham, which appeared to Him to be like Govardhan Hill. With this fresh, transcendental vision of her humble dwelling, Haripriya seemed visibly stirred by this special show of mercy.

The next program, at a home in the red rocks of Sedona in Northern Arizona, Maharaj delighted His host, Kavi das, by utilizing esoteric anecdotes of Kavi's very exhalted Gurudev, Srila Sridhar Maharaj, throughout the lecture. Kavi had

never had the opportunity of having the personal association of his Gurudev, and both he and his wife, Vijaya dasi were extremely pleased not only to hear the narration of the wonderful activities of Kavi das's Divine Master, but also to hear the loving tones with which His Divine Grace spoke of Him.

The last program before Maharaj's departure for New York was, in everyone's opinion, the most ecstatic to date. This took place at the home of Dharmavidya das and Namapriya dasi in Tucson, which were another two hundred-mile journeys to the South. En route to the program, we overheard Rashbihari das and Bhuta Bhavana das, in low voices, practicing various Mahamantra tunes with which we, as Westerners, are familiar. We appealed to them, "Please do not cater to Western musical ears; it would be much more inspiring to hear the spectrum of rasa that exists in traditional Indian Krishna Kirtan." His Divine Grace, meanwhile, was sitting in the front passenger seat, without speaking, throughout the entire journey. That evening, Maharaj gave one of His most wonderful lectures, and at the end, He signaled Bhuta Bhavana das to begin Kirtan. Maharaj was seated at first, but shortly into the glorification of the Lord's Holy Names; He suddenly stood up like a bolt of lightning from Indraloka, and began to lead the Kirtan. Anyone who has been blessed by the Supreme Lord to witness Maharaj's style of Kirtan would attest to the fact that there is nothing a quite like it. We have witnessed many Kirtans, but all the devotees present agreed that this was as though Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Himself were personally dispensing His causeless mercy to the conditioned souls. Maharaj threw His arms in the air and danced from side to side with such devotional intensity and transcendentally expert musicality that everyone in the room was transfixed as though in samadhi. After this incredible spontaneous display of devotional symptoms, which only the Suddha Bhakta can genuinely manifest, His Divine Grace turned to us and humorously asked, "Well, I have done as you have ordered; was that traditional enough for you?" Needless to say, we were speechless. This is a vivid example of the nature of spiritual relationships. The sincere disciple exists only to fulfill the wishes of His Divine Master (and hence, Sri Krishna Himself), but the Acharya, by His own initiative, reciprocates one hundred fold to His disciple's humble attempts at serving by displaying a glimpse into the Infinite Lila of the Supreme Lord.

Metropolis:
The next morning, Maharaj and His entourage departed for New York City, and everyone was greatly saddened to see them leave. Wishing to be permitted the opportunity to render further service, Akinchana followed the party up to New York two days later. As anyone who has been there knows, the New York metroplex is a densely populated area, bustling with action, not unlike Calcutta, and in stark contrast to the widely spread layout of cities in the Southwestern States. There is also a large Indian population in New York, and Maharaj and the devotees commented frequently that it reminded them of home. We stayed at several different locations during our two-week stay, with accommodations provided by sympathetic Hindu gentlemen. Despite the fact that the majority of these hosts had ever, in this lifetime, met a great personality such as His Divine Grace, Krishna, Who is Karuna Sindhu (the Ocean of Mercy), provided them with the opportunity to render service. It is stated in the sastra that by means of one's sukriti (past activities related to God's service, whether conscious or unconscious) one is given the opportunity to serve Him and His pure devotee. It should also be mentioned that throughout the entire New York visit, Devdas Ghosh (whose mother is one of Maharaj's dedicated disciples in India) and an ISKCON devotee named Vaikunthanath das both contributed their valuable time to escort Maharaj, the use of their vehicles and were also responsible for the arrangement of many programs. Maharaj displayed extreme affection for them both.

Nearly every day, Maharaj spoke at homes and also at numerous North and South Indian Hindu temples, as well as various ISKCON centers and other independent Vaishnava centers spread throughout the New York metropolitan area (which also includes New Jersey and Connecticut). The highlight of these engagements, arranged by a very nice Indian gentleman named Pradyumna, took place at the Govindaji temple in New Jersey, which was formerly an ISKCON temple, but is now maintained by the local Indian community. The enthusiatic congregation at Govindaji's was very much attracted to Maharaj's magnetic personality, and for three consecutive nights they gave Him their rapt attention at the temple, and participated with great energy in the Kirtans and the stream of Hindi Bhajans rendered by Bhuta Bhavana das. These Kirtans were so ecstatic that, one evening, Maharaj lead the chanting party into the streets and performed an unforgettable Nagar Sankirtan through the Indian district of Jersey City.

Maharaj's appearance at Govindaji's stirred the heart of a lady named Chander Sharma as she listened to Him speak. She approached Maharaj for Harinam initiation, saying privately that she had been searching for a real Guru since the age of five, and that as soon as she had laid eyes upon Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaj, and heard His spiritual discourse, she knew that her wish had come true. Of course, Maharaj compassionately obliged her sincere request

A Plan for World Peace:

Rashbihari das was very interested in contacting ISKCON Sanskrit scholars who reside in the New York area, which lead him to the meeting of Pradyumna das (different Pradyumna from the Govindaji's temple), a former ISKCON translator and editor for Back to Godhead magazine. By means of his generous assistance, a meeting was arranged between Maharaj and two different United Nations organizations of which Pradyumna himself was a member: the World Conference on Religion and Peace and the World Peace Prayer Society. En route to these meetings, in the car, Maharaj handed us (Akinchana and Rashbihari) a single piece of paper that He had handwritten fifteen minutes before our departure. We read as fast as we could before our arrival at the UN building. Several distinguished representatives of the United Nations who were all active in world politics attended the meeting. The diplomats started the conversation by stating their proposal that strong world government could bring about world peace, even though, by their own admission, they had thus far experienced no success. Maharaj suddenly brought out that same slip of paper which He had shown us in the car, placed it on the conference table and very assertively said, "Here is a plan for world peace."

The conversation stopped abruptly, and Maharaj pushed the paper further into the center of the table, repeating His statement. William Vendley of the World Conference on Religion and Peace picked up the paper and briefly scanned the contents. My impression of this exchange was that, from a mundane perspective, the contents of this handwritten document might have seemed somewhat naive in its simplicity to him. I can assure the reader, however, that this humble piece of paper contained several points, any of which, if followed sincerely, would

actually bring about world peace and harmony. Maharaj, being the direct representative of Sri Krishna Himself, gives only perfect instruction, whereas, those who are conditioned by Maya are constantly inclined to complicate affairs, which ultimately obscures the objective. Maharaj's plan made Krishna the Supreme Governor and Arbiter of any differences of opinion in society. It stated that the ultimate dharma to uphold society is to perform all activity solely for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. Perceiving the hesitant response given to His proposal, Maharaj, gave His own very distinctive chuckle, and with a wave of His hand said, "Well, of course, if you cannot follow this, then you can just have strong world government..." All participants in these meetings were very much taken by Maharaj's sweet and humble personality, and I think it would be safe to say that, regardless of their relative outlooks on life, they believed that Maharaj was a genuine Holy Man.

New York Ratha Yatra:
By Krishna's arrangement, during the time of Maharaj's stay in New York, Lord Jagannath decided to go on His annual sojourn through the streets of downtown Manhattan. Maharaj's party accompanied the procession in a limousine driven by a very nice gentleman named Ramesh Patel (who just happened to be a limo driver). At one point, Maharaj asked from the back seat, "Where is Rashbihari?" I replied to this, "He is up ahead, pulling Lord Jagannath's cart." Maharaj then asked, "Is it correct to say 'pulling' or 'drawing' in the English language?"
I replied, "Probably 'pulling' is more appropriate."Maharaj chuckled and said, "How can we either pull or draw Lord Jagannath? Lord Jagannath acts only according to His own initiative. We have no potency in and of ourselves to do anything, what to speak of compelling God to move. The cart moves by His inconceivable potency, when Lord Jagannath decides, not when we decide."

Throughout Maharaj's stay, we witnessed that He is very fond of utilizing different contexts, such as the one above, to illustrate the Absolute position of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna to His disciples.

Maharaj met many ISKCON sannyasis at the Ratha Yatra festival, and paid His prostrated obeisances in front of each of the three carts, which was a wonderful sight to see against the urban backdrop of 5th Avenue.
The final highlight of the New York tour was Maharaj's visit to the place where

Akinchana's beloved Diksa Guru, ISKCON Founder-Acharya His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada initiated Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's Sankirtan movement in America: Thompkins Square Park. Maharaj paid His heartfelt obeisances at that very spot where Srila Prabhupada had stood more than thirty years before. Maharaj's extreme affection and His utterly humble, deferential feelings towards Guru Varga is one of His most powerful attributes.

Phoenix Part Two:
Due to household responsibilities, I reluctantly had to take leave of Maharaj's presence to return to Phoenix, while He and His disciples continued on to the next leg of their tour to the cities of Orlando and Miami in Florida, and also Atlanta, Georgia (southeastern United States). We have since been told that these programs were extremely successful in terms of attendance and positive response, and those also two devotees in Atlanta received Harinam from His Divine Grace. These successful events were largely due to the organizational skills of Paramadvaiti Maharaj in Florida. As I departed for Arizona, however, I left with the knowledge that I would not be bereft of Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaj's association for very long, as He had agreed to make an unscheduled appearance back in Phoenix on July 2, for three more days, en route to His return to California, then Singapore, and ultimately back home to India. There is a saying that "Lightning never strikes twice in the same place," but it is clear that the Suddha Bhakta is transcendental to such mundane axioms.

The three days that the devotees spent with us this second time around seemed as if a whirlwind of devotional activity had descended from the spiritual world. Once again, there was a constant flow of devotees and guests from all over the state, as well as the very welcome visit from Govinda Madhava das from the Los Angeles ISKCON temple, who had made Maharaj's acquaintance in India. Thursday, we participated in the Harinam ceremony of Maharaj's latest disciple, Jagannath das, which was followed by a highly successful program, and the best attended of all in Arizona, held at the Unity Church of the Southwest in Tempe. Friday, the 4th of July was possibly the most remarkable day of all, as Maharaj performed the Diksa initiation ceremony of Ananta Krishna das, who had received Harinam from Maharaj the month before. The fire sacrifice (which, it should be pointed out, took place outside in the carport of our apartment building, in spite of Phoenix's relentless 110 degree heat) was an intensely

intimate and moving ceremony, performed in an improvised fashion, utilizing those materials which could be found locally. The day before, Maharaj had given Ananta Krishna das a long list of more than thirty items required for the Yajna. As he embarked on his search for the necessary items, there was some doubt as to whether or not all these items could successfully be procured within the few short hours prior to the start of the rite.

Certainly things like Kusa grass were in short supply in Arizona. Nonetheless, at the crack of dawn, the carport was thoroughly scrubbed down, the bricks for the fire prepared, and Maharaj, with extreme gravity, began the sacrifice by reciting many beautiful and potent mantras. Suddenly, at one point, He broke His grave manner as He held up a clump of local grass we had provided and instructed everyone, "We are all thinking that this is Kusa grass, yes?" After which He went back to reciting the sacred mantras. Of course, the spiritual potency invested in the bonafide representative of Sri Krishna overcomes any possible limitations imposed by time, place and circumstance.

The day continued with almost non-stop Kirtan, culminating in a wonderfully intimate program at our home. That evening, after a beautiful heartfelt introduction by the very affectionate Govinda Madhava Prabhu, Maharaj delivered a most wonderfully enlightening, impromptu discourse on the purport of the story from the Mahabharata wherein Yudhistira Maharaj answers the questions posed by the crane demon. The atmosphere was intense, as all of Maharaj's disciples were there, knowing fully that by the next morning, their Spiritual Master would depart from their physical vision. Maharaj has said, however, in this regard, "Just as the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna is present everywhere, so too, the absolute counterpart of the Supreme Lord, Sri Gurudev, is present everywhere. Therefore, we are not to feel that He is not present at all times." In one letter that Maharaj wrote to us back in 1982, Maharaj stated, "The Supreme Lord resides within the heart of every living entity, so there is factually no one nearer to you than Him." We are to understand, therefore, by these instructions, that there is no relationship closer than that of Sri Guru and His disciple, and that there is no one nearer to us than Sri Guru who, out of His causeless mercy resides as the Well Wisher and "Indwelling Monitor" (as Maharaj says) of all the jivas.

Return to India:

The next day, we escorted Maharaj and His party of excellent devotees to the airport. There loved exchanges between all, and many pranams. We had developed a strong bond of love and affection not only with Maharaj, but also with Rashbihari das, Bhuta Bhavana das and Madan Mohan das as well. They have come to be referred to as "our extended family members overseas." As we waited for the flight to begin boarding, there was much discussion about the future. As per this discussion, we have begun the transcription of Maharaj's English US lectures, one of which, "The Teachings of the Gita," has already been published and distributed throughout India. It is our hope to serve Maharaj by publishing the entire collection of these lectures, as well as audio and video tapes of both lectures and Kirtan, and make them available to the devotee community at large, worldwide. We also discussed Maharaj's eventual return to the West, which He said would occur sometime in 1998 if Krishna arranges it. We request the reader of this unworthy offering to kindly contact us at bhakti@gokul.org if you would like to participate in the arranging of future programs in your part of the world, or if you would like to receive information about upcoming publications, so that as many people as possible may benefit from the teachings of Srila Gurudev.

Sometimes, we are in disbelief that we have been so exceptionally blessed by Sri Sri Guru and Gauranga to have such close personal association of a Suddha Bhakta such as His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj. Our only explanation is that it is the result of Krishna's causeless mercy. The sacred sastras tell us that the Suddha Bhakta Himself is a holy place of pilgrimage, a Tirtha. Having been blessed by the imprint of the footsteps of such a Divine Tirtha, our home, Phoenix, New York and all the places where Maharaj has left His indelible influence have now also become Tirthas.

Begging the dust of the Lotus Feet of the Divine Master upon our unworthy heads, and always desiring to be engaged in His service, we submit this humble offering with the desire that He may be pleased, and that all who read of His transcendental activities may receive His mercy.

The Brahmin and The Cobbler

A Brahmin once asked Narada Muni, "Oh! Are you going to meet the Lord? Will you please ask Him when I'm gong to meet Him?" "All right," Narada agreed. "I shall ask Him." As Narada proceeded, he met a cobbler who was sitting under a tree mending shoes, and the cobbler similarly asked Narada, "Oh! Are you going to see God? Will you please inquire from Him when I'm going to meet Him?" When Narada went to Vaikuntha planets he fulfilled their request and asked Narayana about the request of the Brahmin and the cobbler. Narayana replied, "After leaving this body the cobbler shall come here to Me." "What about Brahmin?" Narada asked. "He will have to remain there for number of births. I do not know when he is coming." Narada Muni was astonished, and he finally said, "I cannot understand the mystery of this." "That you will see," Narayana said. "When they ask you what I am doing in My abode, tell them I am threading the eye of a needle with an elephant."

When Narada Muni returned to earth and approached the Brahmin, the Brahmin said, "Oh! You have seen the Lord? What was He doing?" " He was threading an elephant through the eye of a needle," Narada answered. "I don't believe such nonsense," the Brahmin replied. Narada could immediately understand that the man had no faith and that he was simply a reader of books. Narada then left and went on to the cobbler, who asked him, "Oh! You have seen the Lord? Tell me, what was He doing?" "He was threading an elephant through the eye of a needle," Narada replied. The cobbler began to weep. "Oh! My Lord is so wonderful, He can do anything." "Do you really believe that the Lord can push an elephant through the eye of a needle?" Narada asked. "Why not?" the cobbler said. "How is that?" Narada asked. "I am sitting under this banyan tree," The cobbler answered, "and you can see that so many fruits are falling daily, each fruit have seeds in it and in each seed there is a banyan tree like this one. If within a small seed there can be a big tree like this, why it is difficult to accept that the Lord is passing an elephant through the eye of a needle?"

param gato 'pi vedanam sarva-sastrartha-vedy-api
yo na sarvesvare bhaktas tam vidyat purusadhamam.

"Even though one may have gone to the other side of all the Vedas, and even though one is well versed in all the revealed scriptures, if one is not a devotee of the Supreme Lord, he must be considered the lowest of mankind." (Garuda Purana) On 04 May 08.

The Disappearance Day of Sri Gopal Bhatta das Goswami

A part of the 1999 US Tour of His Divine Grace Om Vishnupada Paramahamsa 108 Sri Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Gosvami Maharaj

As part of the New York leg of His US tour, on 1 August 1999, the disappearance day of Sri Gopal Bhatta das Goswami, His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaj, along with His spiritual associates, visited the ISKCON Mandir in Brooklyn. There, Srila Gurudeva and His entourage were warmly received with flower garlands and all appropriate paraphernalia by the Vice-president, Sri Kadacar das, and other enthusiastic devotees. The illustrious visitors then took darsana of the Holy Deities.

Leaving the Brooklyn temple, they made their way to Tompkins Square Park in downtown NYC, where rousing kirtana, loudly resonating the words of Narottama das Thakur's *"Saparsad-bhagavad-viraha-janita-vilapa,"* ("Lamentation Due to Separation from the Lord and His Associates," from "Prarthana") along with chanting of the Holy Names of Sri Krsna, was led by Sri Bhuta Bhavana das. This took place with Srila Gurudeva at the very spot under the tree where, in the 1960's, Srila Prabhupada (His Divine Grace Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Svami Maharaj) had initially disseminated His message of Krsna Consciousness to the West. After the exhilarating kirtana was finished, Srila

Gurudeva gave an eloquent and spiritually insightful speech in the way that only He can. In a mood of intense devotion, He elucidated the significance of this special day, the disappearance of Sri Gopal Bhatta das Goswami. The highlights of this speech are as follows:

"On a day such as this, one should pray for the mercy of the Vaisnavas. It is the injunction of the sastras that we should do this on both the appearance and disappearance days of saintly persons. These days are full of spiritual potency. Sri Gopal Bhatta das Goswami, one of the six Gosvamis is in fact, in Krsna-lila, the Gopi Ananga-Manjari. He appeared at Ranganatha Dhama at the house of Venkata Bhatta in South India. Sri Krsna Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself stayed at Venkata Bhatta's house for a period of four months, profoundly influencing Sri Gopal Bhatta das Goswami. Sri Gopal Bhatta das Goswami eventually went to Vrindavana where, among His many spiritual achievements, He obtained the Saligrama Sila from the Gandaki River in Nepal and established the Radha-Ramana Temple in Vrindavana."

Srila Gurudeva then recited ***"Sad Gosvami Astakam"*** and gave an explanation of its significance. He stated that it is our duty to remember Sri Gopal Bhatta das Goswami on the day of His disappearance. He said, **"We may not have seen Sri Gopal Bhatta das Goswami directly, but we *have* seen our Gurudeva (His Divine Grace Nityalila Pravistha Om Visnupada Paramahamsa 108 Sri Srila Bhakti Dayita Madhava Gosvami Maharaj), Who is His Absolute Counterpart. Therefore, today we pray for the mercy of Srila Gurudeva. We pray that He may forgive our offenses, and that we may attain the rare opportunity of service to His Lotus Feet. We also fervently pray for the mercy and service of His Istadeva, Sri Krsna Caitanya Mahaprabhu."**

Seeing His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaj speaking "Hari-katha" with the people from the park gathered round to listen was like traveling in a time machine to those earlier years, when Srila Prabhupada had first initiated the Krsna Consciousness movement in the West. One could clearly see the ongoing indestructible nature of Sampradaya. Even though different gurus have their own individual personalities, in a certain respect, they are one. Via the

medium of these direct representatives of the serving aspect of Sri Bhagavan, the divine message of Sri Krsna goes on throughout time, unchanged, for the welfare of all living entities.

It is worth noting that in the 1960's, when His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaj was still known as Sri Krsna Ballabh Brahmacari, He met His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktvedanta Svami Prabhupada at the Damodar Mandir in Vrindavana. At that time, Srila Prabhupada delineated His plan to go and preach in the West, and asked Sri Krsna Ballabh Brahmacari to accompany Him. Sri Krsna Ballabh Brahmacari explained, with great humility and deference, that He could not do so, as He had the instructions of His own Guru Maharaj to follow, along with many responsibilities deputed to Him within His own Math. In 1997, Srila Gurudeva's siksa guru, His Divine Grace Om Visnupada Paramhamsa 108 Sri Srila Bhakti Pramode Puri Gosvami Maharaj, gave Him the order to go to the West, as He Himself could not make the journey. He was advised to continue preaching to the western world the message of Divine Love of Sri Krsna Caitanya Mahaprabhu, as put into motion by His predecessor, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Svami Prabhupada.

In His lectures, Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaj sometimes can be heard to say that He requests His siksa guru , A. C. Bhaktivedanta Svami Maharaj, to forgive Him for not having been able to accompany Him to the West, due to His other responsibilities. Srila Gurudeva is among the most spiritually elevated personalities of His time, or any other time, and is the President/Acarya of Sri Caitanya Gaudiya Math. He exemplifies by this demonstration of humility, the true nature of the bonafide acarya. We should follow the example of Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaj and, with sincerity, adopt this position of utter respect and humility toward all great spiritual personalities. The behavior of the acarya is always for the benefit of the fallen souls, and in accordance with the will of Bhagavan Sri Krsna.

On this special day, following Srila Gurudeva's example and instructions, we offer our most humble dandabat pranams at His Lotus Feet, at the Lotus Feet of Sri Gopal Bhatta das Gosvami and to all the Vaisnavas.

Humbly submitted by,

Rasavihari das
Akincana das
Lalita dasi
Vrinda devi dasi

1 August 1999

mailto:bhakti@gokul.org

The Glories Of HDG Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj

Boston Common, Boston, Massachusetts: 23 August 2002. Why has Sanjaya das Prabhu suddenly brought us to this place? Is there anything that can occur spontaneously or are events such as this preordained? Our Most Revered Parampujyapada Parivajakacharya Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj came to this place and started kirtan. In his remembrance, we are performing kirtan here, so that he will be satisfied. The ultimate goal should be the satisfaction of Sri Krishna. Krishna bestowed so much grace upon Srila Swami Maharaj. Our Paramgurudeva Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur, the Absolute Counterpart of the Supreme Lord, was the founder of Sri Gaudiya Math and Sri Chaitanya Math. It was he, who, as the spiritual master of Paramapujyapad Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj, imparted to him the power to preach all over the world.

Srila Swami Maharaj started on his life's mission by praying for the grace of

Supreme Lord Sri Krishna and His personal associates. We have heard that he came alone, with no assistance from others. His Gurudeva had given him the order to spread the all-embracing, all-accommodating divine knowledge and love of God throughout the world. He travelled from India with great difficulty and eventually disembarked in Boston. I have heard that he came by ship and that this was the first place he came to in the USA. Today is the day when Swami Maharaj left India for the USA. This is a very important day! HDG Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaj leads a nagar sankirtan procession.I have a connection with him. We may say that this is accidental but actually everything is preordained. Nothing occurs by chance.

When I was in Vrindavan at Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math with my revered Gurudeva Parampujyapada Srila Bhakti Dayita Madhava Goswami Maharaj, we heard that a godbrother of our Gurudeva, Parampujyapada Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj, was staying at the Sri Sri Radha-Damodar temple. As he was a godbrother of our Gurudeva and a disciple of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur, he was naturally the object of great regard and reverence. Thinking, "I shall go there and pay my obeisances to him," I made my way to the Sri Sri Radha-Damodar temple. Upon meeting him, I offered my humble obeisances and he then began to speak. Showing me his writings, he said, "I want to publish a monthly magazine, Back to Godhead. Please go through my writings." The printing, by Vrindavan Press, was very indistinct. Because it was his order, I tried to go through it. When I had gone through the text he had given me, he said, "I have written other articles. You should also go through those." He did not mention at that time that he had the desire to go to foreign countries to preach. The only thing that he said was that I should go through his writings. After that I prayed out loud to him, "Will you not come to our Math? Our Gurudeva is there. Please come and see him." He immediately agreed, saying, "Yes, I will come tomorrow to see your Gurudeva."

The very next day he came to our Math and entered the room of our Gurumaharaj. I remained outside during the discussion of these two godbrothers. Only Swami Maharaj and our Gurudeva were there. Neither I nor anyone else knows what subject they might have been discussing. Swami Maharaj came out of the room after about half an hour or so to go back to his temple. At the gate of our Math, he suddenly called me and said, "You see, I have the desire to go outside India to spread the message of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Will you accompany me? Will you go with me?" Because at that time I was the Secretary of Sri Chaitanya Gaudiya Math institution and had been given enormous

responsibilities by our Gurudeva, I remained silent. Swami Maharaj is guru---shiksha guru---and our guru is also guru---diksha guru---what could I say? Therefore, I remained silent. Finally I said that I was the Secretary of that institution and that Gurudeva had given me many responsibilities. With urgent work to do, how could I leave at that time? He was disappointed as he could not find anyone to assist him.

Ultimately, he came to the west alone. He came to this place first. He traveled by ship, not by air, and he disembarked here. He performed kirtan here by the grace of the Supreme Lord. The Supreme Lord can do anything. Nothing is impossible for him. If we have straight-forwardness and sincerity of heart then the Supreme Lord will fulfill our desires. We should perform kirtan with straight-forwardness of heart and sincere belief. Srila Swami Maharaj performed kirtan alone here. Do you think that it is possible to do this alone---to propagate the message of divine love alone throughout the world? How is such a thing possible? It is possible only by God's grace! We should think about this! We should not worry whether or not many persons are coming to assist.

When our Paramgurudeva Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur wanted to take initiation from Srila Gaura Kishore das Babaji Maharaj, Babaji Maharaj said, "I have made up my mind. I shall not take on any disciples. If I accept you as my disciple then I shall have to give consideration to you. This will distract me from my worship. I cannot assume the responsibility." Our revered Paramgurudeva would come and pray for the grace of Babaji Maharaj repeatedly but was refused every time. Acting as though he were a person exhibiting a sort of mundane vanity or pride, Srila Gaura Kishore das Babaji Maharaj would tell Paramgurudeva that there are many gurus, so why bother to make repeated supplications to him? He should go to some other person. However, our Paramgurudeva remained firm in his resolve. Repeatedly he would come, about fourteen times in all. Finally, Babaji Maharaj said to him, "I will ask Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. If he so orders, then I shall give you mantra."

After some days had passed, our Paramgurudeva again prayed, "Will you please ask Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu on my behalf?" Gaur Kishore das Babaji Maharaj replied, "Oh, I have forgotten about it." When we become bewildered we lose our faith and cannot progress, but our Paramgurudeva remained undeterred. Feeling disappointed, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur left. After some time, he again returned. He was always praying to the Supreme Lord, "Please kindly fulfill my desire!" Our Paramgurudeva asked Babaji Maharaj,

"Did you ask Sri Chaitanyadeva?" Babaji Maharaj replied, "Yes, I did ask." Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur then said, "What did He say?" Gaura Kishore das Babaji Maharaj said, "Mahaprabhu says that you have mundane vanity and pride. He says that you should not be given mantra." Then our Paramgurudeva became very disappointed. He remained there, praying to Lord Chaitanya, "Please give me Your order." At that time, Gaura Kishore das Babaji Maharaj was sitting on a broken boat on the bank of the confluence of the Ganges and Saraswati rivers. He was always performing harinama. If someone rich, such as an influential zamindar (land owner), came to touch his holy feet, he would immediately curse them that all their wealth and possessions would be destroyed. They were afraid of him and paid their obeisances from a distance. Nobody had the courage to touch him. But then, Babaji Maharaj, after so many times refusing to give mantra, all of a sudden took the dust from his own lotus feet and besmeared it on Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur telling him, "You are the only person capable of spreading the message of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, therefore I am blessing you and giving you mantra." He imparted all his power to only one disciple!

Having received the orders of his Gurudeva, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur then performed six years of penance. He chanted Supreme Lord Hari's Holy Name one billion times. Such great austerities! After this, he thought, "I have no personal qualities. How will I be able to fulfill the desire of Gurudeva?" He felt very discouraged, always praying for the grace of Gurudeva. Paramgurudeva's father, Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur, was also his Gurudeva. He had a vision of Bhaktivinode Thakur, Gaura Kishore das Babaji Maharaj, Jagannatha das Babaji Maharaj and the Panchatattva (Sri Krishnachaitanya in five features or aspects). They told him not to be afraid and that many people would soon come to follow him. "Preach the message of divine love of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu! Start!" Taking this to heart, he went to Ultadanga Road in Calcutta and started Sri Gaudiya Math. Srila Gaura Kishore das Babaji Maharaj, with only one disciple, started the whole movement. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur also imparted that powers to others. Wherever they went, they were not afraid of anything. They met with many high government officials. They had no fear and went everywhere because they had the power of their Gurudeva behind them. Srila Bon Maharaj also went to London following the orders of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur. They were preaching in this way. Ultimately, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur wrote a letter with specific instructions to Paramapujyapad Swami Maharaj who was a householder at that time.

When I visited New York in 1997 , Vaikunthanath das Prabhu, a disciple of Swami Maharaj, met me and was very enthusiastic to take me to different places where I met many devotees. I went to different ISKCON temples and was eventually taken to Tompkins Square Park by Vaikunthanath Prabhu and one of Swami Maharaj's dedicated sannyasi disciples. At that time, Sriman Vaikunthanath Prabhu asked me to listen to a taped lecture of Srila Swami Maharaj. I told him that I would hear it as soon as the opportunity arose. I eventually heard it during a two-hour car journey to Hartford, Connecticut.

In that recording, Swami Maharaj was relating his life story including the disappearance of our Paramgurudeva Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur. Swami Maharaj said, "I did not have enough money to maintain my family. I could not get money or earn anything in Calcutta, so I went to Bombay (Mumbai) but was not successful. In the meantime, I heard that our Gurudeva was in Puri. He was not feeling well. He might leave the planet at any moment. Hearing this, I was disturbed. At present I am in my house, thinking how to maintain my family. On the other hand, my godbrothers are with Srila Gurudeva. They are serving. My life is futile. Thinking like this, I then wrote a letter to Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur, saying, 'Kindly instruct me. I am your unfortunate disciple. I could not serve in the way that all of you are serving. Please give some orders to me.' Srila Gurudeva received the letter and then replied saying that I had a good hold over English. He said that it was his desire that I spread the message of divine love of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu to all the corners of the world. I thought, 'All right, I shall try.' At that time I was thinking that I should keep some money for the welfare of my family although I was trying to fulfill my Gurudeva's order. Then I got the news that Gurudeva had passed away. I thought, 'I am wasting time in householder life, attached to worldly relations. By doing this I shall not be able to fulfill the desire of Gurudeva.' Immediately after that I renounced family life."

Swami Maharaj stayed first for several years at the Sri Sri Radha-Damodar temple. I met him at that time. With great risk of life, he always prayed for the blessings of his Gurudeva and performed the kirtans of Srila Narottama das Thakur and Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur. Nobody in the west understood them. But he prayed nonetheless. In this way all the people of the western world got into the habit of singing songs written by great devotee sages. Wherever I go, I now hear those songs. Srila Swami Maharaj himself used to sing and would also translate and publish great Vaishnava literatures.

This is the first time that I have come to Boston. Our Paramapujyapad Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj came here by ship earlier where he started the spread of the message of all-embracing, all-accommodating divine love of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in the west.

I am only here for four days. I am staying at Sanjaya das Prabhu's house. He has brought us here. This place is holy for us. Take the dust. [Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaj takes the dust from the park and puts it on his head.]

Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaj wanted me with him, but I could not come. I committed an offense at his lotus feet. Everything is preordained by the Supreme Lord.

Gaura Premanande! Hari Hari bol!

The Glories of Observing Sri Narasingha-Caturdashi-vrata

vaisakhasya caturdashyam
suklayam sri nrikesari
jatas tad asyam tatpujot-
savam kurvita savratam
(Padma Purana)

"Sri Nrisimhadeva appeared on the fourteenth lunar day (Caturdashi-tithi) of the bright fortnight of the month of Vaishakha. So, on this day, it is proper to worship and celebrate the appearance of Nrisimhadeva by following the rules of fasting and others."

prahlada-klesa nasaya
ya hi punya caturdasi
pujayet tatra yatnena
hareh prahladam agratah
(from the Agamas)

"It is proper to worship Prahlada before worshipping Nrisimha because the holy fourteenth lunar day of the bright fortnight has appeared in order to remove the distress of Prahlada."

It is written in the Brihan-Narasimha Purana as follows: Prahlada Maharaja desired to know from Sri Nrisimhadeva how he had developed devotion to His lotus feet. Nrisimhadeva replied, "In ancient times, there lived a brahmin named Vasu Sharma in the city of Avanti, who was well-versed in the Vedas. His good wife Sushila was famous throughout the three worlds for her virtuous conduct and ideal devotion to her husband. Vasu Sharma fathered five sons in Sushila's womb. His first four sons were learned persons of good conduct and devoted to their father. But you, the youngest son, became attracted to a prostitute and lost your character. You were then known as Vasudeva. Your virtuous conduct was destroyed in the company of that prostitute. Due to a quarrel with the prostitute, on the Nrisimha-Caturdashi-tithi both of you stayed awake throughout the night and unknowingly observed a fast. Therefore, both of you obtained the fruits of observing Nrisimha-Caturdashi vrata. The prostitute enjoyed as an Apsara in various ways in heaven and then became my favorite. As the son of Hiranyakashipu, you also took birth as My dear devotee. By observing this fast, Brahma has obtained the power of creation and Maheshvara has obtained the power of destruction of the three worlds. Other people also achieve all kinds of power and perform observance of this vow to fulfill all their desired objectives."

From: Dasavatara. On 18 May 08.

The Glories of Sri Chandan-Yatra Festival

Sri Jagannathdev has told the following to king Indradyumna (he who constructed the temple in Puri):

Vaisakhasya site pakshe tritiyakshaya sañjika
tatra mam lepayed-gandha lepanairati-sobhanam
(Utkal Khand, Chapter 29)

'In the 3rd day of the bright fortnight during the month of Vaisakh, Akshaya-tritiya, smear My Transcendental Spiritual body with fragrant sandalwood paste.'

In Sri Vishnudharmottar it is written, 'anulepana mukhyanta chandanam parikirtitam' – sandalwood paste is superior among other smearing articles. This is also mentioned in Sri Narad Puran.

Chandan-Yatra in Narendra Sarovar

Sri Purushottamdev has ordered the Vaishnava king Sri Indradyumna, His servant at that time, to smear fragrant sandalwood paste on His Transcendental Spiritual body on Akshaya-tritiya, the 3rd day of the bright fortnight during the month of Vaisakh. Following that order, even today Sri Jagannathdev's vijaya-vigraha, Sri Madanmohandev is boarded on a palanquin everyday starting from Akshaya-tritiya till the 8th day of bright fortnight in the month of Jyesta and is taken from Sri Jagannathdev's temple to the banks of Sri Narendra sarovar (lake). Sri Madanmodandev sails in the boat along with His minister, Sri Loknath Mahadev and others.

This Narendra sarovar is also called 'Chandanpukur' because the Chandan-Yatra of Sri Madanmohan takes place here. This 'Chandanpukur', which is 873 feet long and 743 feet wide, is situated almost a mile away from Sri Jagannathdev's temple in the North-East direction. This huge sarovar is bound on all the four sides and there are stone-made steps. The king's subordinate, Narendra Mahaptra, has established this sarovar (lake), in the 13th century.

narendrer jale govinda naukate cadiya
jalakrida kare saba bhakta gan lañya
saba bhakta lañya prabhu namilena jale
saba lañya jalakrida karena kutuhale

(Composed by Sri Vrindavan Das Thakur in Sri Chaitanya Bhagavat)

Sri Govindadev’s Chandan-Yatra is described in Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita and Sri Chaitanya Bhagavat. It is also described there that Sriman Mahaprabhu used to take devotees to Sri Jagannath temple after sporting in the waters of Chandanpukur. Later, Sri Madanmohan has come to be known as vijaya-vigraha of Sri Govinda.

About three hundred years ago, the king of Bengal, Pratapaditya moved Sri Jagannathdev’s representative Sri Govindadev from Sri Purushottam to a place called Raipur near Takir after conquering Utkal. From then on the Chandan-Yatra in Narendra sarovar is performed for Sri Madanmohan instead of Sri Govindadev.

Starting from Akshaya-tritiya, daily in the afternoon, Sri Jagannathdev’s representative, Sri Madanmohan along with Lakshmi and Saraswati board one boat and Sri Ramkrishna along with five Mahadevas board another boat.

The five Mahadevas

(1) Sri Loknath (2) Sri Yameshwar (3) Sri Kapalmochan (4) Sri Markandeyeswar (5) Sri Nilkantheswar travel by 5 different palanquins.

(1) Sri Loknath Shiv, one of the five secretaries as well as gate keepers of Sri Jagannathdev, is located almost 1.5 miles towards the West of Sri Jagannath temple. This self-manifest Shiva-linga is immersed in water and the temple is surrounded by stoned walls.
(2) Sri Yameshwar Shiv – Sri Hari-Hara Deity. In front of him, there are Garuda-sthamba (the Garuda pillar) and Vrisha-sthamba (the Taurus pillar). His other name is Muktishwar. He has destroyed the pride of Yama. If anyone dies in that holy land, Yama’s law cannot bind him.
(3) Sri Kapalmochan Shiv – This temple is situated near the South gate of Sri Jagannath temple. It is said that previously Brahma had 5 heads. Sri Mahadev has severed one of those heads but he could not disassociate that severed head from his hand. When Mahadev did not get shelter anywhere in heaven, earth and lower planetary worlds, he went to Sri Purushottam, which is known to be Vaikuntha on this earth, and took shelter to Sri Jagannathdev. Only then he got rid of the sin incurred due to killing of a Brahmin (brahma-hatya-dosh). That is

why he is named ‘Kapalmochan’. He resides in Sri Kshetra and sings the glories of Sri Jagannathdev. He is most prominent among the five secretaries as well as gate keepers of Sri Jagannathdev.
(4) , (5) On the South-Western side of the Banyan tree, Markandeya muni has constructed a landing stage named Markandeya-ghat and worshipped Sri Purushottam’s beloved lord Siva upon His instruction. At this place, both Sri Makandeyeswar and Sri Nilkantheswar are situated.

The celebrations

This Chandan-Yatra festival is celebrated for 21 days. At various locations along the way between Sri Jagannathdev’s temple and Narendra sarovar, many pavilions are made and decorated with leaves, flowers and fruits. Sri Madanmohan boards the palanquin and while traveling to Narendra sarovar He takes rest, accepts offerings and enjoys the singing and dancing after arriving at each of the pavilions. After that He reaches the Narendra sarovar. In the heart of Sri Narendra sarovar, Sri Lakshmi and Saraswati board a nicely decorated boat along with Sri Madanmohan. The ministers, 5 Mahadevas and Sri Ramkrishna board in another boat. In the first boat devadasis offer their dance and in the later small boys known as ‘natua-pilar’ dance.

There are three temples in the Narendra sarovar. At the center of the biggest temple a well is situated. The water fetched from that well is used to bathe Sri Madanmohan, Sri Lakshmi and Sri Saraswati. In the second temple, Sri Ramkrishna and in the third the five Mahadevas stay. The Deities are worshipped and offerings are made. The banks of the pond and the three temples are decorated and garlanded with lights. After the festival concludes, the Deities board the seven palanquins and return to the temple. They reach the destination in the second part of the night.

Everyday Sri Madanmohan is decorated and garmented differently. Another name for Chandan-Yatra is Gandhalepan (smearing of sandalwood paste) yatra.

On the 20th day of Chandan-Yatra, the vijaya-vigrahas go for a pleasure trip in the waters of Sri Narendra sarovar and on the 21st day, turmeric waters are sprinkled on the two boats.

The power of transcendental remembrance

Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Who is the combined manifestation of Sri Radha and Sri Krishna, is worshipped in Sri Chaitanya Math, Sri Gaudiya Math and Sri Chitanya Gaudiya Math and by all the scriptures that propagate pure devotion. Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had performed the pastimes for the first 24 years of His life in Sri Mayapur and the remaining 24 years in Sri Jagannath Dham, Puri.

A detailed history of Sri Chandan-Yatra festival as observed in Sri Jagannath Dham, Puri, which is to be meditated upon with devotion, has been written in this article. It is impossible for an ordinary person to comprehend those pastimes. The glories of Sri Purushottam Dham, where Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu performed His last pastimes, can never be understood by any common man. But there is no reason to get disappointed. One gets the actual benefit in all circumstances only by the power of transcendental remembrance.

The Glories of Sri Lalita Sakhi

Today is an auspicious day. Because one of the eight sakhis, confidantes, the extension of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and the prominent sakhi, Lalitā Devī, has her appearance on this holy day. It is better to use present tense, because she is making her appearances in infinite brahmāṇḍas somewhere or other. Appearance is eternal. Kṛṣṇa-līlā pastimes are eternal. His personal associates' appearance is also eternal.

So, we are to remember her, we are to pray grace from her, and we are to sing her glories. This is the devotional prescript: we should perform pūjā, we should worship her, we should remember her. Every day we should remember. Especially on the holy advent day, all throughout the day we should remember her. And also we should pray for her grace, and also sing the glories belonging to Lalitā sakhi.

Lalitā sakhi's advent place is in Uncha-gaon, in northwest of Barsāna Dhām – the famous place of Rādhārāṇī. Uncha-gaon is a village on a small hill. You have to climb, you have to go step by step there. There is one temple there with Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's śrī-murti, and also the Deity of Lalitā Devī is there. We go up to that place. And there is a place now to sit there, to pray for the grace of Lalitā Devī, and we can also circumambulate the temple.

We are directly connected with Lalitā Sakhi. Our Bhaktivinod Ṭhākur, in "śrī rādhā-kṛṣṇa pada-kamale mana" has prayed to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. There he has stated in the hymn, that:
yugala-sevāy śrī-rāsa-maṇḍale niyukta koro' āmāẏ
lalitā sakhir ayogẏa kiṅkarī vinoda dharichhe pāẏ
He is giving his own introduction: I am an unworthy maidservant of Lalitā Sakhi. Please kindly give me the service of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. He is praying for the grace of Lalitā Sakhi.

Amongst all the mañjarīs who are under Lalitā Sakhi, the foremost is Rūpa Goswāmī, Rūpa Mañjarī. In Kṛṣṇa-līlā, Rūpa Goswāmī is Rūpa-mañjarī, the best of all the manjarīs under Lalitā Sakhi. Both Bhaktivinod Ṭhākur and Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Ṭhākur have got that place of bhajan, Braja-Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja, in Rādhā-kuṇḍa, in Lalitā Sakhi's place. They have shown the ideal way of worshipping Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

And that place is still there – when we go there, we pay obeisances to that place. There are sevakas there who worship Bhaktivinod Ṭhākur and Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākur Goswāmī in Lalitā Sakhi's kuñja in the grove of Lalitā Sakhi, one of the aṣṭa-sakhis, in Rādhā-kuṇḍa. The aṣṭa-sakhis, eight sakhis, are: Lalitā, Viśākhā, Chitrā, Indulekhā, Champakalatā, Raṅgadevī, Tuṅgavidyā and Sudevī.

There are eight groves, therefore, in Rādhā-kuṇḍa. With devotees' devotional or spiritual eyes, they can see. Because the realm is transcendental, we cannot see with these material eyes.

So this is very important, the holiest day, for the Gaudiya Vaiṣṇavas--at least Sāraswat Gaudiya Vaiṣṇavas--because our Param Gurudev, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Ṭhākur, has given his own introduction: I want the dust of Rūpa-mañjarī, Rūpa Goswāmī. He has prayed for the dust of him, and he has propagated the divine love or divine message, actually of Rūpa

Goswāmī. Our school of thought actually belongs to Rūpa Goswāmī, or Lalitā Sakhi.

So first, we are to pay our innumerable prostrated obeisances to the lotus feet of most revered Lalitā Sakhi and pray for her grace to forgive us for all our offences, and to give us, to bestow on us, the scope to get the service of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, in Vraja-maṇḍal, especially in Rādhā-kuṇḍa, the highest place.

And also, we have not seen Lalitā Sakhi. We don't know whether we shall see Lalitā Sakhi or not in any life. But we have seen our Gurudeva. We should remember our Gurudeva, and pay innumerable prostrated obeisances at the lotus feet of Gurudeva, to forgive for our offences, which I might have committed knowingly or unknowingly. They are all-merciful. They can forgive me, and give me the scope of getting the service of his lotus feet and the lotus feet of his object of worship, the lotus feet of Lalitā Devī and the lotus feet of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

-- *Excerpt from a lecture given by His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj in Moscow in the year 2001.*

The Glory of Sree Tulsi

You will get enough evidence in Skanda Purana, Padma - Purana, Brahma Vaivarta - Purana and other Puranas regarding glory of Tulsi and advent of Sree Vrinda Devi as 'Holy Tulsi Tree' in this world to grace the souls of this world by bestowing on them service of Sree Krishna and Sree Narayana.

Souls are deprived of the service of Sree Krishna, when they unfortunately become averse to Him due to misuse of relative independence. It is narrated in Brahma Vaivarta - Purana that Vrinda Devi appeared in this world as Tulsi accepting King Dharamadhwaj as Madhavi Devi as her parents on Kartika Purnima tithi as per desire of Sree Krishna and Sreemati Radha Rani. As there

was none equal to her in beauty, she was named 'Tulsi'. Tulsi performed a pastime of severe penance to get Narayana as her husband and got the boon from Sree Brahma in regard to this. As per desire of Sreemati Radha Rani, Sudama Gop appeared in this world as 'Shankhachura Danava', with whom Tulsi was married. Shankhachura Danava seized 'Swarga' by his tremendous power. Demigods initially took shelter of Brahma, then Shiva and ultimately went to Vishnu for rescue from the oppression of Shankhachura Danava.

Lord Vishnu appeared, killed Shankhachura and fulfilled the desire of Tulsi. Lord Vishnu conferred the boon to Tulsi that her body would become river Gandaki and her hairs would be Tulsi. Lord Vishnu appeared in this world as Shalagram Shila.

Whatever the Will of Lord does is for the eternal benefit of all, as He is All-Good. Cow-dung (stool of cows), Conch-shell (bone of an animal) has become sacred by the Will of Lord. So what difficulty is there in believing 'Tulsi' as the Holy tree appearing in this world by the Will of The Supreme Lord Sree Krishna to bestow on us His service? There is nothing impossible for God Who is Omnipotent. God can appear in this world in any form He likes, for the eternal good of the enslaved souls, over whom He has got affection. You are to perform Tulsi Puja daily.

The only way of getting deliverance from “Maya”

"This world is not the place of our permanent stay”-
Living beings, being averse to Supreme Lord Sree Krishna are in the grip of birth, death and threefold afflictions. This material world is not the place of our permanent stay. Actually we (human beings) are of Krishna, in Krishna and by Krishna. Total submission to Supreme Lord Sri Krishna will bestow us eternal peace. Already we have heard— “Back to Home and back to Godhead”. Eternal blissful realm of Krishna is the actual place of our stay. Association of bona fide

devotees is the only way of getting deliverance from “Maya”. I want your grace so that I can dedicate myself fully to the service of Sree Krishna.

Why a jiva (conditioned soul) is forced to commit sin even against his desire to do it?-
“Arjuna asked— “O! Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, why a jiva (conditioned soul) is forced to commit sin even against his desire to do it? You have stated that a spirit soul is eternal and pure— completely separate from all material qualities and relations. As such a jiva cannot commit sin by nature, but it is seen they are always committing sins. Therefore, clearly tell me who is engaging jiva to commit sin.” Bhagavan said, “O Arjuna! Passion originating from Raja-guna induces a person to commit sin. Käma (passion) is desire for enjoyment. Passion is turned into anger by circumstance. Käma (passion) is produced by Raja-guna and when there is obstruction in the fulfilment of the desire, by the influence of Tama-guna, it turns into anger. “Käma” is very violent and can devour everything. “Käma” is the principal enemy of jiva.

The only way to know the Transendental reality

What benefit will we derive by coming to the temple and hearing the glories of the Supreme Lord from the lips of the devotees? Wherever we see the benefits we will attend it. Nobody needs to be taught to earn money. Everybody understands money is necessary. They are earning money day and night; whether in Singapore or America. They know that without money they cannot move. This is our necessity. Nobody has to be taught about this. Similarly, when you understand why one performs worship of Sri Krishna then you will give time to attend.

This human birth is very precious. After passing through many births in different species, trees, insects, aquatic animals and land animals you get a human birth. It is said that you must pass through 80 lakhs of different species before you attain a human birth. So, a human birth is very rare and valuable.

You can only perform worship of Sri Krishna in the human species. Even birth as a demigod is not congenial for harinam. No other creatures can perform harinam. Because you are human you can accept the Supreme Reality, you can perform bhajans and you can worship Sri Krishna. You have this human life and you should utilise it properly and not waste it.

How can you know about Krishna and Ramachandra? How can you know? You can know only through the ears but not through the eyes. You can see the real form of sadhus through the ears. You can see the real form of Krishna and Ram through the ears. But we have no time to listen.

Parikshit Maharaj heard from Sukadev Goswami continuously for seven days without taking any food, without sleeping and without taking water. Then he attained the ultimate purpose of life. But we have no time to hear. Even if you want material knowledge you have to go to the masters, teachers. You have to hear them to get the material knowledge. For transcendental knowledge there is no other way except this ear. Our Param Gurudev, Srila Saraswati Thakur, used to say “Transcendental Reality can only be known through the ears. There is no other way.”

You have attained this precious human birth but it will not last long. You have this golden opportunity but you could lose it at any moment.

King Bharat, relinquishing worldly life, went to the forest to worship Sri Krishna uninterruptedly. By chance he developed affection for a deer. In that forest maya entered and he started thinking of the deer. At the time of death he was thinking “who will maintain the deer? Who will take care of the deer?” In his next birth he became a deer.

anta-kale ca mam eva smaran muktva kalevaram.

“You will take birth according to whatever you think of at the time of death.” Although king Bharat performed great severe austerities, he was thinking of the deer at the time of death and took birth accordingly.

The Panihati Mahotsava

While Raghunath Das was devising a plan for how he would be delivered from his entanglements, he heard that Nityananda Prabhu had made an auspicious appearance in the town of Panihati. Thinking that Nityananda was the deliverer of the most fallen and that by his mercy he would surely be able to find his freedom, he went across the Ganges to Panihati where he found the Lord sitting under a tree on a wooden seat, surrounded by his associates. As soon as Raghunath saw him from a distance, he fell down like a rod. The merciful Lord Nityananda immediately had him brought close to him and, understanding the deep-rooted desires of Raghunath's heart, arranged for him to perform a service to the Vaishnavas so that he could realize them.

"Like a thief, you don't come near me, but simply try to run away. Now that I have caught you, I shall punish you. I want you to feed all my followers chipped rice and yogurt." When he heard Nityananda's command, Raghunath's mind was filled with joy. (Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.6.50-1)

The festival which Nityananda ordered Raghunath to put on is still celebrated as the Panihati Ciriadadhi Mahotsava. Nityananda Prabhu and a manifestation of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu himself celebrated the festival, eating on the banks of the Ganges just as though they were cowherd boys on the banks of the Yamuna River. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Nityananda Prabhu, their associates, numerous Brahmins and countless men and women from the area enjoyed a feast of milk and chipped rice and yogurt and chipped rice. The opportunity to serve the Lord and his devotees in this way was something that could not come about except for some great fortune.

On the following day, Raghunath Das Goswami emotionally asked Nityananda through Raghava Pandit how he could possibly gain freedom from his material entanglements and find the association of Mahaprabhu. Like an ocean of mercy, Nityananda Prabhu placed his feet on Raghunath's head and said,

“You arranged this feast on the banks of the river and Mahaprabhu was merciful to you and came here himself to enjoy it. He blessed you by accepting the offering of chipped rice and yogurt. Then, after watching the devotees’ dancing, he took prasad in the evening. Lord Gauranga came here just to deliver you and now he has removed any impediments which remained. He will turn you over to Svarupa Damodar and making you his confidential servant, he will keep you by his side. Go home now and forget your worries. You will soon be able to go to the Lord without any difficulties.” (Chaitanya Charitamrita 3.6.139-143)

After discussing with Raghava Pandit, Raghunath gave a large sum of money as dakshina to be paid to Nityananda and his associates. He himself felt as though his life had been fulfilled after receiving Nityananda Prabhu’s blessings.

The Qualification for Seeing God

Excerpts from the Holy Biography of His Divine Grace Nityalila-pravista Om Visnupada Paramahamsa 108 Sri Srila Bhakti Dayita Madhava Gosvami Maharaj

Srila Bhakti Dayita Madhava Gosvami Maharaja is the Spiritual Preceptor of His Divine Grace Sri Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaja, who related these excerpts originally in Bengali. A full English edition of this biography will be available from GOKUL in the near future.

In this text, the title "Srila Gurudeva" refers to Srila Bhakti Dayita Madhava Gosvami Maharaja.

Notable among the many places Srila Gurudeva visited in the zillas of Gowalapada and Kamarupa are Bijni, Bhatipada, Hauli and Barapeta. At one particular large gathering at Hauli, many Hindus and Muslims were present. Srila Gurudeva had requested the listeners to save their questions until after the speech so as not to cause any interruption, but nonetheless, a maulavi spoke up during the lecture saying, "Has anybody seen either the atma or the

paramatma? What proof is there that you are not cheating everybody with false talk? Although many did not think it appropriate for Srila Gurudeva to answer at that time, He decided to respond immediately within the gathering itself. Otherwise, there would be those among the ignorant who would think that He did not have a suitable reply.

The maulavi had a book in his hand. When asked by Srila Gurudeva what it was, the maulavi replied in his own language (Urdu) that it was a "kitab" (book) and told Him its title. Srila Gurudeva was quite conversant in many languages such as Assamese, Bengali, Hindi, English, etc. His eyesight was also perfect. Nevertheless, He asked, that as He Himself could not read the name of the book, how was He to know for sure whether or not the Maulavi Saheb was being truthful regarding the title of the book? Those who were near the maulavi scrutinized the book and loudly confirmed that what the maulavi had said was true. To this, Srila Gurudeva replied that these people had grouped together with the maulavi for the purpose of deluding everyone else. Slightly taken aback, the maulavi now wanted to know the speaker's motivation for making such a statement. Srila Gurudeva responded by saying that when He looked at the title of book, all He saw were some footprints left by a crow after it had walked over some spilled ink. Embarrassed, the maulavi said that surely, Srila Gurudeva did not know the Urdu language. Srila Gurudeva admitted that He did not.
The maulavi then wanted to know how Srila Gurudeva could possibly dispute the title of the book without knowing how to read the Urdu script?

Taking advantage of this open conversation with the maulavi, Srila Gurudeva explained that even though one may have experience in many other areas, it is still necessary to study Urdu properly in order to understand it. Even if one has perfect eyesight but has no actual understanding of Urdu, then the form, sound and meaning of the language possess no content. In the same way, despite having many other skills, special knowledge is required to know about the atma and paramatma. Learning can be of two types: that of the flesh, and that of real knowledge. The eyes of the flesh see nothing but the material world. To see beyond it requires an altogether different type of vision, that which is blessed. It is in the very heart of the seeker that knowledge manifests itself.

The Qualities of a Sadhu

Due to the desire of the devotees in the West and in India, and as per the order of my *siksa* guru, Param Pujyapada Puri Gosvami Maharaja, I have come out of India and traveled to many parts of the world. By the grace of my *siksa* guru, I am finding devotees everywhere. God has sent us to these places to get the company of the devotees there. By having the company of the devotees, we can get devotion to Supreme Lord Sri Krsna. "*Bhaktistu bhagavada bhakta sangena parijayate*." By associating with the pure devotee, you can get devotion to the Supreme Lord. There is no other way. By associating with the *karmi, jnani* or *yogi,* you cannot get devotion. A devotee may be in the ascetic or household order, but either way, if you keep company with the devotee, you can get devotion. Our most revered Guru Maharaja used to invite all the devotees, both ascetics and householders, to large spiritual conferences. So, we have also developed this aptitude for *sadhu-sanga* by observing him. We should serve and keep the company of devotees. Then we can achieve the objective-love for Krsna.

How can we recognize the *suddha bhakta*, the pure devotee? The signs, symptoms and attributes of the *suddha bhakta* have been elucidated in *Caitanya Caritamrta*. In this literature, Kaviraja Gosvami has narrated the life and precepts of Caitanya Mahaprabhu. In *Madhya-lila*, he has written, "It is very difficult to narrate all the qualities of a Vaisnava. So, I am giving only a general overview, a hint of this." He then mentions twenty-six special qualities of a *suddha bhakta* or *sadhu*:

krpalu, akrta-droha, satya-sara,
sama nidosa, vadanya, mrdu, suci,
akincana

sarvopakaraka, santa, krsnaika-
sarana akama, aniha, sthira,
vijita-sad-guna

mita-bhuk, apramatta, manada,
amani gambhira, karuna, maitra,
kavi, daksa, mauni (Madhya-lila,
22.78-80)

These are the twenty-six principle qualities. Can you understand this? Perhaps

you might think that Svamiji has gone crazy. "What is this he is saying?" We cannot understand this. Even Bengalis will not be able to understand. If I speak to Bengalis in their native tongue, they will also be unable to understand this because this is something beyond this world. "What is this Svamiji speaking?" they will think. What to speak of English speaking persons, a Bengali will not be able to understand this. When I first heard such terminology, I also did not understand. When our Guru Maharaja came to our village, my younger brother informed me that a hari-sabha, a huge Vaisnava meeting, was taking place. All the distinguished persons of the town were present. When I arrived, the site was fully packed with people-mostly lawyers. My uncle, who was also a lawyer, was there. My friend, who was the son of a government lawyer, also came with me. Our Guru Maharaja was addressing the gathering and we listened. I could not understand anything. I just looked at him. We had never heard such words at our homes or our schools and colleges. "What is this he is saying?" we thought. "This '*antaranga-sakti'*, '*bahiranga-sakti*', '*tatastha-sakti*', internal potency, external potency, marginal potency--what is all this?" I did not understand anything at first. Now, I have been at the Math for some time, so I have become acquainted with these words. At first, when I heard Guru Maharaja, I simply looked at him, without understanding. The only thing I understood was that Guru Maharaja was a great teacher, a great personality and that he was a *krsna-bhakta*. He advised us to perform worship of Krsna. I thought, "I want to worship Krsna, so I should go there to the Math to get *krsna- bhakti*." That much I had understood, and nothing else. How can we come to understand?

"*Krpalu*": The *sadhu* should be compassionate. One symptom of the *sadhu* is that he tries to remove the difficulties, the miseries, of the conditioned souls of this world. That is the nature of the *sadhu*. He is always compassionate and kind to all *jivas*.

"*Akrta-droha*": If anybody does any harm to him, the *sadhu* does not retaliate. He tolerates it. By this behavior, we can understand whether or not he is a *sadhu*. "I will become furious if anybody does any injury to me! I shall retaliate and teach him a lesson!" If a person thinks like this, then he is not a *sadhu*. In a *sadhu*, the tendency of retaliation toward hostility is absent.

"*Satya-sara*": Truthfulness (*satya*) is the sole object of his life (*sara*). He

cannot speak lies. "*Sama*": *Sadhus* are equal and impartial to all. "*Nidosa*": *Sadhus* are faultless. You cannot find any fault in them.

"*Vadanya*": They are bountiful and munificent. Their hearts are magnanimous.

"*Mrdu*": They are of mild temperament. *Sadhus* never become harsh. They are very mild. "If anyone says something against me, I will become furious and speak harsh words." *Sadhus* cannot speak like this.

"*Suci*": *Sadhus* are pure.

"*Akincana*": They have no desires of this world.

"*Sarvopakaraka*": They do good to all the living beings of the world.

"*Santa*": As they have no desires, their minds are always restful-calm and quiet. When we have desires that we cannot fulfill, we become disturbed. But the *sadhus* have no desires, so they are calm and quiet. If anybody comes in contact with them, that person will also become calm and quiet. Why? Because of "*krsnaika-sarana*".

"*Krsnaika-sarana*": This is the original quality of the *sadhu*. God is the embodiment of all qualities--infinite, transcendental qualities. When you worship the Supreme Lord with devotion, these qualities will descend to you. You can get these qualities. So, this original quality of the *sadhu* means that he has taken absolute shelter of Supreme Lord Sri Krsna-- absolute shelter.

The discussion between Kapiladeva and Devahuti in the Third Canto of *Srimad Bhagavatam* illustrates this. Mother Devahuti was asking questions and Kapila Bhagavan was answering her. Mother Devahuti, the consort of Kardama Rsi, prayed to her husband, "Please give me a son! Without a son, my life is futile." Then Kardama Rsi told her, "If you want a son, then I shall leave and go to the forest. Choose which one you want-me or a son." Devahuti became puzzled and remained silent. But after some time, she again appealed to her husband, "Without a son, I cannot be happy. Please give me a son." Repeatedly, Devahuti prayed to her husband for a son. Finally, Kardama Rsi instructed her, "We must perform penance, as per my direction. Then, by the grace of the Lord, you will get a son." Thus, he and his wife both embarked on the performance of immense penance together.

Observing the strong desire and penance of Kardama Rsi and Mother Devahuti, God Himself made up His mind to appear there as their Son. He appeared first in the heart of Kardama Rsi. Then, Kardama Rsi imparted

knowledge of that Divinity to his wife by *diksa* initiation, and that same Divinity entered into her heart. Eventually, at the auspicious time, the Supreme Lord entered into Mother Devahuti's womb. After that, all the demigods came to know of the imminent appearance of Bhagavan and came to offer prayers to her womb. Afterward, Brahma came to Mother Devahuti and told her, "Mother, God is appearing as your Son. Do not think Him to be a human being." After alerting her, Brahma and the other demigods left.

On the auspicious day, Bhagavan Kapila appeared. Just after His appearance, He assumed the *padma-asana*, the yogic lotus sitting posture, on the bank of Bindu Sarovar. Upon seeing this, Mother Devahuti was astonished. "No child can sit like this as soon as he is born! What is this? Oh! Brahma told me that I should not think my Son to be a human being. God has appeared!" Then she made obeisances to Kapila Bhagavan, saying, "For so long I have been entangled in worldly desires! Therefore, I prayed so many times to my husband to grant me a son. Now that You have appeared, I can understand this." If someone has lived in darkness throughout his entire life, will he be able to understand that he is in darkness? When a glimpse of light comes, he realizes, "Oh! I was in darkness for such a long time!" Like this, Devahuti said, "For so long I was bereft of knowledge, but when you appeared, I realized that I had been in ignorance, enveloped by nescience. This was the reason why I prayed for a son. Please tell me how I can pass over the ocean of births and deaths and the miseries of this world."

Kapila Bhagavan smiled. Why? He thought, "Why is Mother Devahuti speaking to Me in this way? 'I was in ignorance, I desired a son, etc.' I do not appear in the impure heart! What is she saying?"

sattvam visuddham vasudeva-
sabditam yad iyate tatra puman
apavrtah
sattve ca tasmin bhagavan
vasudevo hy adhoksajo me
namasa vidhiyate (Srimad
Bhagavatam, 4.3.23)

These are the words of Mahadeva (Lord Siva) in the Fourth Canto of *Srimad Bhagavatam*. Vasudeva appears in the sanctified heart. Vasudeva means

sanctified heart. "J*ahan kama, tahan nahi rama*" (Tulasi dasa Gosvami). "Where there is lust, there is no Rama." When we desire things for the satisfaction of our own gross and subtle senses, we come into contact with the inferior things of this world. God cannot appear there. Where there is the desire for enjoyment, there is no Rama, no God, no devotee and no realm of God-nothing is there.
Kapila thought, "Why is she saying this? I appear in the sanctified heart! They have no desires of this world! They wanted Me, so I have appeared."

But Mother Devahuti said, "I was in darkness for such a long time." This is the special quality of the *suddha bhakta*. The *suddha bhakta* is the highest, but he has no pride or vanity. Because *suddha bhakta*s have knowledge of the Supreme Lord, because they have the taste of the highest truth, they think that they are nothing. When you see an inferior thing, you think, "I am higher than that. I am superior to it." But when you see a superior person, your head automatically bows down to him. So, it is very difficult to understand a *suddha bhakta*. The *yogi* and the *jnani* have pride. Actually, the *suddha bhakta* is the object of worship of the *yogi* and the *jnani*, but he has no vanity. So, the *suddha bhakta* cries that he has been in this world for so long, full of material desires.

So that we will not commit any offense toward the *suddha bhakta*, Kapila Bhagavan warned, "Mother! You do not have any such material desires! Your heart is sanctified! But, I shall reply to whatever you might ask me on behalf of the enslaved *jivas* of this world, for their eternal benefit!"

Then Kapila Bhagavan began His instructions to Mother Devahuti. You are to hear this repeatedly. We have already heard this many times, but it is our nature to forget. We hear now and, when we go outside, we forget. The repetition of hearing and chanting is necessary for this purpose. For my own self, it is also necessary-I also forget:

cetah khalv asya
bandhaya muktaye
catmano matam
gunesu saktam
bandhaya

ratam va pumsi

muktaye (Srimad
Bhagavatam, 3.25.15)

The mind is the cause of bondage. But this same mind is also the cause of emancipation. How can this be? If one's mind is attached to *tri-guna*, the primal qualities of the external potency, then that person is in bondage. If his mind is attached to *pumsi*, to Supreme Lord Sri Krsna, Who is the Transcendental Supreme Reality, then he is emancipated. It has nothing to do with the body. This body has no work relevant to emancipation. The body is neither the cause of bondage nor emancipation. The mind is the cause of both. If one engages his mind in thinking about these worldly, temporary things, then he is in bondage. If one meditates on the Supreme Lord, his mind always being concentrated on Him, then he has salvation. So, mind is the cause of bondage and also of *mukti*--deliverance from the clutches of *maya*.

Mother Devahuti put questions to Kapila Bhagavan for the benefit of the enslaved *jivas* of this world. She asked, "What is *tri-guna*? We have little knowledge. Clearly explain this to me." It is something abstract. We cannot understand abstract things. She asked, "Explain this in a concrete way," so that we may understand. We are dunderheads. We are fools.

She continued, "Also, if we can achieve emancipation by having our minds attached to Supreme Lord Sri Krsna, how can we cultivate that attachment to Sri Krsna?" We cannot see Krsna. With our sense organs, we see all the living beings of this world and communicate with them. We exchange thoughts with them. We know that this body and all its relations will not live forever. We know this very well, but as we constantly exchange thoughts with these relations, we become attached to them. We see the deity in the temple and devotees refer to Him as Bhagavan, but He does not speak to us. If there is no exchange of thoughts, how can we cultivate attachment to the Lord? This is the problem. Rarely, from among crores (tens of millions) and crores of devotees, the Supreme Lord may have spoken to one or another. But He does not speak to us. Without such an exchange of thoughts, how can we feel love? Please explain this."

Then, Kapila Bhagavan said:

prasangam ajaram
pasam atmanah
kavayo viduh
sa eva sadhusu krto
moksa-dvaram

apavrtam
(Srimad Bhagavatam, 3.25.20)

Tri-guna means *rajo-guna*, *sattva-guna* and *tamo-guna*. By *rajo-guna*, living beings are created. By *sattva-guna*, those living beings are sustained and maintained. By *tamo-guna*, they are destroyed. Birth, existence and death are directed by these three *gunas*. This body is *tri-guna*. It was born and it will remain for some time in this world. Ultimately, it will perish. In concrete form, what is *tri-guna*? This body. If we always think only about the body--how to beautify the body, how to get the comforts of the body--then, we are attached to *tri-guna*. This is the cause of firm attachment. Where shall we go if we are always thinking about the body and, also, other bodies in relation to this body? "I have not seen the real self of my wife. I am seeing the tabernacle, the cage--both the subtle and the gross bodies-in which *atma* is residing. The body I see has been born, it will remain for some time and then it will die. I am associating with my own body. I am giving my attention to my own body, a non-eternal thing, and to other non-eternal things related to my own body, such as my wife, my children, etc. We are busy looking after our own body and other bodies.
Kapila Bhagavan says that this is the cause of firm attachment. It is very difficult. We are in contact with the non-eternal things of this world. We are giving all our energy to non-eternal things. Thus, we become attached to them. It is only common sense.

Mother Devahuti then asked, "How can we communicate with the Supreme Lord? How can we cultivate that attachment to Sri Krsna? If we have attachment to the Supreme Lord, we will be rescued. But we cannot see Him. We see Him in His Deity form only. He does not speak with us."

Kapila Bhagavan replied, "You cannot see the Supreme Lord with these material eyes. '*Sa eva sadhusu krto moksa-dvaram apavrtam*.' But, you can see the *sadhus*. They are moving about, just as you are. You can talk with them; you can exchange thoughts with them. You can behave this way with the *sadhus*. Then, you will be rescued. You cannot see God. This is true. You are presently giving your attention to your own body and other bodily relations, but you should give your energy for the service of a true devotee, the *sadhu*, the *suddha bhakta*. *Prasangam*: you should associate with them correctly, not superficially, externally. You can associate with the *sadhu* from here even if the

sadhu is in India. India is so many thousands of miles away from the USA. But even from the USA, you can associate with the *sadhu* in India. The *sadhu* is thinking about the service of his object of worship: Radha- Govinda-Mahaprabhu. If you follow that thought, even from a great distance, then you are associating with the *sadhu*. But, remaining in physical proximity to the *sadhu* does not necessarily imply association. You have gone to the Math and you have slept in the same room, by the side of the *sadhu*, but you were thinking about something else. The *sadhu* was thinking about the worship of Sri Krsna but you were thinking about something else. Can you have association with the *sadhu* like this? We once saw a Babaji Maharaja who was lying on his bed. He had been going from temple to temple, always performing *harinama*. While he was lying on the bed, we noticed that there were many bugs in it. They were "associating" with Babaji Maharaja. What were they doing? They were sucking his blood! Direct contact! This is not association. There are other kinds of insects, such as lice, who like to remain in the best part of the body: the head. What do they do? By sitting on the head, the best part of the body of the *sadhu*, they suck his blood. Merely remaining in the vicinity of the *sadhu* is not *sadhu-sanga*. The *sadhu* is thinking about the Supreme Lord and how to serve Him, but I am thinking how to exploit the *sadhu*. This is not *sadhu-sanga*. You can have *sanga* from a distance if the purpose is correct. The end justifies the means. If the end is bad, everything will be bad.

Srila Rupa Gosvami has advised us how to associate with

the *sadhus*: *dadati pratigrhnati*

guhyam akhyati prcchati
bhunkte bhojayate
caiva sad-vidham
priti-laksanam (Sri
Upadesamrta 4)

When you love someone, what do you do? You exhibit this kind of six-fold behavior. "*Dadati pratigrhnati*": you give something to your beloved and take something from your beloved. Give and take--you have love for one another. "*guhyam akhyati prcchati*": you speak your heart to him and you hear his heart. This communication between hearts is there. You have love. You feed that person with great love, and whatever that person gives, you take it. In this way, you can have *sadhu-sanga*. If you perform such behavior with an *asadhu*, an evil-minded person, then evil thoughts will come to you. If you behave this way with a *suddha bhakta*, a pure heart, by donating money, the wealth of this

world that is like poison, that *sadhu* will take it and engage it in the service of the Supreme Lord and the *sadhus*. After that, he will give some *prasada*. *Prasada* may be anything, such as a cloth or something else that the devotee may take. Once, Sanatana Gosvami was requested to accept a new dress-cloth from Tapana Misra. Sanatana Gosvami refused the new cloth, saying, "No, I will not take this new cloth. But, as you are a *brahmana*, I must accept your gift. I must also accept because Caitanya Mahaprabhu has ordered me. But kindly give me a cloth

that has been used by yourself. That *prasada*, I want. I do not want a new cloth." By using the used cloth, there will be no poison of *visaya*--the enjoying spirit will be removed. "*Visaya*" means " the object of enjoyment". It is the cause of our fall. When we give some *visaya* as a gift to the *sadhu*, he will engage it in the service of the Supreme Lord and the *sadhus* and return something to us. We should engage in this kind of exchange of behavior with the *sadhu*. We should open our hearts to the *sadhu*, and the *sadhu* will likewise open his heart. He will speak confidential things to us--*bhajana rahasya*: he will impart to us the esoteric aspects of worship. When I give my heart, then he will also give. I have to feed him with love, and he will give *prasada*. By such behavior, we can associate with the *sadhus*.

We should follow the teachings of the *sadhu*. We are not to place importance merely on external behavior. We must see the purpose for which *sadhus* are acting: for the service of Sri Krsna and the devotees. We should behave like the *sadhu* only when we understand the purpose of their behavior. We should follow, not imitate. What is the difference between following and imitation? This story may be given as an example.

There was once a peddler who maintained his family by selling caps. He would carry the caps on his head in a wicker basket. He would walk through the streets all day long selling these caps, taking his food along with him and eat along the way. He spent the day walking along the road, shouting, "Very nice caps for sale today! Price reduced! Take! Take! Take!" People would come and purchase his caps and he would thus maintain his family. But one day, even though he had spent the entire day shouting, he could not get any money. Not a single person had bought anything. Needless to say, he was very disappointed. Toward the afternoon, he became fatigued from so much walking. So, he sat under a big banyan tree.

Being hungry, he ate the food that he had brought with him. After having eaten, he became drowsy and began to yawn. As he was so tired, he thought, "Let me lie down for some time." He spread a chadar on the grass beneath the tree and lay down. He placed the wicker basket, filled with caps, by the side of his head. He also kept a cap on his head and fell asleep.

After some time, some monkeys came from nearby and climbed up into the banyan tree. From the top of the tree, they could see that someone was sleeping underneath, who had a cap on top of his head, and next to him was a wicker basket-full of caps! "Oh!" they thought. "Let us get those caps!" They descended the tree and, silently, they approached the basket. Each monkey took one cap and put it on his head. In this way, all the caps were emptied from the basket. The monkeys became very satisfied with themselves by having put the caps on their heads. They climbed back up the tree and started to jump about from one branch to another with great delight, shrieking, "Kak! Koo! Kak! Koo!"

Hearing the sound of the monkeys, the peddler woke up. He was surprised to see that it was now evening. He looked at his wicker basket and saw that it was empty. "What? Not a single cap was sold but the caps are all gone! Who took them?" He looked about and saw the monkeys with the caps. "Now I have eaten all the food and have none left. If I have no food to give the monkeys, they will not return the caps." If you go to Vrndavana, there are many monkey-devotees there. Those monkeys will steal your spectacles. They will only return them if you give them some food. Now, this peddler realized that he had nothing to give the monkeys. "If they surround me, I shall be killed by them!" he thought.

He became enraged and shouted, "You have taken all that I have! Why have you not taken the cap on my own head? Here, you should take it!" He took his cap and threw it at them.

The monkeys saw this and, taking their own caps in their hands, threw them at the peddler below. Because the peddler had thrown his cap toward them, they also threw their caps toward him. Now their caps were on the ground and they were left with nothing. They do not know why one wears a cap. They simply imitate. Such imitation is not good. "How is the *sadhu* sleeping? He is sleeping like this, so I shall have to sleep like that. How is he sitting? I shall have to sit like that. How does the *sadhu* take his steps?" All this is imitation. You have to know the purpose. You will be able to follow by knowing the purpose.

Mother Devahuti again put a question to Lord Kapila, "You are now advising us to associate with *sadhus*. How can we recognize the *sadhu*? Who is the *sadhu*? What are the symptoms? What are the qualities of the *sadhu*? Please tell me."

Then, Kapila Bhagavan said, "By these qualities, you are to understand. One particular quality is the original quality: *krsnaika-sarana*. When that original quality is there, side by side, there are other concomitant qualities." First, Kapila Bhagavan described these accompanying, concomitant qualities. He describes the original quality later on. By seeing these qualities, you are to know that the person is a *sadhu*:

titiksavah karunikah
suhrdah sarva-
dehinam ajata-
satravah santah
sadhavah sadhu-
bhusanah
(Srimad Bhagavatam, 3.25.21)

We have been discussing the twenty-six qualities listed by Kaviraja Gosvami, but here, in a simplified form, Kapila Bhagavan is saying that these are the secondary or concomitant qualities. In Sanskrit, these are called "*tatastha-laksana*". The original quality is called "*svarupa-laksana*". You have to know the terminology of *sanatana-dharma* or you will not be able to understand. You have to be acquainted with the devotional terminology of Caitanya Mahaprabhu's teachings. "*Tatastha-laksana*" means concomitant qualities, side by side with the original quality. The accompanying qualities appear only when the original quality is there.

The first of these accompanying qualities is "*titiksavah*": tolerance, forgiveness. *sadhus* have no material desires, so *sadhus* can be tolerant. When we have desires and there is some obstacle to the fulfillment of those desires, then we become angry. "*Kamat krodho 'bhijayate*" (*Bhagavad-gita*, 2.62). We become unbalanced. The only desire of the *sadhu* is the satisfaction of Sri Krsna, nothing else. He has no desire for wealth, no desire for sexual satisfaction, no desire for name and fame. If we have the desire for wealth and someone puts some obstacle in our way, we become furious. But there is no cause for the *sadhu* to become furious and unbalanced. He does not want anything. Therefore, the *sadhu* is, by nature, tolerant and forgiving towards others.

Our Guru Maharaja used to give one very good illustration of this. The *sadhu's* behavior should be such:

ghrstam ghrstam punarapi punah candanam caru
gandham chinnam chinnam punarapi punah
sadhucaiva iksu khandam dagdham dagdham
punarapi punah kancanam kanta rupam na
pranante prakrtir-vikrti jayate sajjananam

"*Sat-jana*": "*Sat*" means that which exists eternally. "*Hari om tat sat*." *Sat* is transcendental and that which is transcendental is *sat*. Mundane things are not *sat*. *Sat* is Hari, the Supreme Lord. The associates of Sri Hari, the devotees of Hari, are called "*sat-jana*". Under no circumstances do they become unbalanced. Take for example, sandalwood. If you rub sandalwood, if you graze it, does the sandalwood say, "Oh! You are giving me pain! I shall stop smelling sweetly. I shall give off a bad odor"? If you rub sandalwood, will it ever give off a bad smell? The bad smell is absent from its nature. You will always get a sweet smell from it. In this way, if the *sadhu* is oppressed, does he say, "Oh! He has done injury to me!" and retaliate? No! Instead, he is thinking, "I have done some wrong. This person is only instrumental. I am experiencing the fruits of my own actions. This person is not the cause."

The *sadhu* tolerates the oppression. But we, in our ignorance, blame others for our own miseries.

Narada Gosvami gave advice to Dhruva. Dhruva's mother, Suniti, also advised him thusly. "If you have any kind of hostile mentality against your stepmother, then you will not succeed in your worship of the Lord. You will not receive His grace. Your stepmother is not the cause of your miseries--you are the cause. You have brought this upon yourself through some behavior in a previous birth. You are now reaping the fruits of that behavior:

mamangalam tata paresu
mamstha bhunkte jano yat
para-duhkhadas tat (Srimad
Bhagavatam, 4.8.17)

"Do not blame others for your afflictions. You do not realize that you are receiving the same afflictions that you once inflicted upon others. God is omniscient. There cannot be any mistake in His judgment. You should

tolerate this." *Sadhus* think like this. A *sadhu* does not retaliate against the oppression of others. Goodness always emanates from the *sadhu*. He cannot give any injury to any living being of this world. The tendency toward harm is completely absent from his character, so how can he do harm? He always does good toward others. In the holy biography of Prahlada Maharaja, you will find that he tolerated the oppression of Hiranyakasipu. Haridasa Thakura, during the life of Caitanya Mahaprabhu, also tolerated great oppression--*titiksavah*.

If sugarcane is cut to pieces, will it say, "Oh! You have given me affliction! I shall give up my sweet nature! I shall become bitter or sour!"? Even if you cut sugarcane to pieces, it will not give up its nature. It will always give a sweet taste. Its nature is to give sweetness. No other tendency is there. If you heat gold, that gold will not give up its radiant glow. "Oh! I have been burnt by fire! I shall give up my beautiful radiance and become black!" No, as much as you heat the gold, by that much, its glow will increase. Like this, if you oppress the *sadhu*, his glory will be manifested ever more and more. He is incapable of doing any harm to any living being of the world. By such behavior, you are to understand such a person to be a *sadhu*.

"*Karunikah*" is like "*krpalu*". The *sadhu* is always compassionate and kind to all the *jivas* of this world. He could very easily worship by sitting in one holy place of pilgrimage, but he chooses not to do this. Instead he moves from one place to another because he sees that all the living beings of this world do not know how to find their eternal welfare. They are in darkness. Seeing this, the *sadhu* cannot tolerate it. He moves from one place to another to make the *jivas* understand that they are on the wrong path. "You have forgotten your Supreme Lord, Who is All-Bliss, All-Existence, All-Knowledge! You are running after a phantasmagoria! You should worship the Lord!" Like that, the *sadhu* goes from door to door. This was Caitanya Mahaprabhu's order to Nityananda Prabhu and Haridasa Thakura. "Go beg from door to door. Do not beg for money, etc., but say, "*Bolo `krsna,' bhajo krsna, koro krsna-siksa!*" Nityananda Prabhu and Haridasa Thakura went to every door and said, "We have come with this message of Caitanya Mahaprabhu! Please utter the Name of Krsna! We do not want anything else. Worship Krsna! Study about Krsna: find out who you are and what your relationship is with Him. This is all we beg from you." Going from house to house, as per the direction of Caitanya Mahaprabhu, they did this. Today, through that preceptorial channel, as per the direction of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, we are going to different places and performing sankirtana everywhere. So, this is the way in which the

sadhus do good to others, for their eternal welfare. Those who are enslaved *jivas* are in bondage. They do not know what is in the interest of their own eternal welfare. What can they do? They can do things for material benefit, but not more than that.

"*Suhrdah sarva-dehinam*": *Sadhus* are the friends of all corporeal living beings. Are they only friends of the human beings and enemies of the beasts? No. They see that, in every

being, the spiritual spark is present. We were also previously born as aquatic animals, trees, birds, etc. We should be compassionate toward them. We should not kill them. The *sadhu* has no impetus to do any injury to others because he sees Krsna and that all are connected to Krsna. If I love you, I cannot have the tendency to injure any part of you. To love you means that I love you along with all your parts. That is actual love. I say that I love you, but I am, at the same time, cutting your hand or cutting your leg. That is not love. If I have love for Krsna, then I shall have love for all living beings. Then actual love is there. *Sadhus* have this understanding. For this reason, they cannot have the temptation and mental inclination to do injury to others. It is absent in them.

You might say, "Yes, but they are eating vegetables. Vegetables also have life and they are killing them." Yes, it is true that if one eats vegetables for his own sake, then he is killing them. But what do *sadhus* do? They do everything for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord. They know that all the living beings have to serve the Supreme Lord. These beings (vegetables) are in an undeveloped state of covered consciousness and they have no way to serve the Supreme Lord. But *sadhus* offer them for the service of Sri Krsna:

yajna-sistasinah
santo mucyante
sarva-kilbisaih
bhunjate te tv agham
papa ye pacanty
atma-karanat
(Bhagavad-gita, 3.13)

One of Bhagavan's Names is "Yajna" (sacrifice). He is the only Enjoyer and Master. He destroys all the sins of the devotee who partakes of the remnants of prasada. But, those who take vegetarian or non-vegetarian food are both

incurring sin. Those who are taking vegetarian food are less sinful because they are killing less developed sentient beings. If one kills a highly developed sentient being, that is the greatest sin. But *sadhus*, after cooking, offer the preparations to the Lord, as per scriptural injunction. When those vegetables are being offered to the Lord, they are performing service. For that, those entities receive eternal benefit. There cannot be any sin in this activity when there is eternal benefit. They are doing good to those entities. All their sins will be destroyed. *Sadhus* do not merely take vegetables. They take that which can be offered to the Supreme Lord as *prasada*.

"*Ajata-satravah*": *Sadhus* do not see anyone as their enemy. "This is my friend and that is my foe." You will not find this sort of discrimination in the *sadhu*. All are connected with the Supreme Lord. There is no foe. My mind is the greatest foe. I have no other foe in this world. Prahlada also says in his prayer to the Supreme Lord, "When we become enveloped by the illusory energy of the Supreme Lord, we have the vision that this is my friend, that is my foe, this is mine and that belongs to someone else. We get this sort of distorted vision when we are enveloped by *maya*. I bow down to the Supreme Lord, by Whose energy, we in this world think that this man is a foe and that man is a friend, this country is a foe and that country is a friend."

"*Santah*": *Sadhus* are always calm and serene because they have no desire other than the service of Sri Krsna.

"*Sadhavah sadhu-bhusanah*": *Sadhus* give all respect to the scriptures. They practice everything as per scriptural injunction. They do not go against scripture. Another meaning of this phrase is that they are simple hearted, simple natured. They have no crookedness.

These are the secondary qualities of the *sadhu--tatastha-laksana*. But what is the original quality?

mayy ananyena
bhavena bhaktim
kurvanti ye drdham
mat-krte tyakta-
karmanas
tyakta-svajana-
bandhavah
(Srimad Bhagavatam,
3.25.22)

Kapila Bhagavan says, "I am the Complete Reality. One who is loyal to Me, to the Whole, is actually a *sadhu*." If you are loyal to the USA, you might harbor hostility toward other countries. If you are loyal to Europe, then you might exhibit hostility toward Asia. If you have loyalty for this world, then, in the interest of this world, you will go to exploit Mars and other planets. If you have loyalty for this *brahmanda*, constituted of fourteen planetary systems, you will exploit another *brahmanda*. If, however, you act only on behalf of Complete Reality, the Supreme Lord, whom can you exploit? Everything is in Him. That person whose allegiance is to Complete Reality is the actual *sadhu*. Deviation from that, when one's interest is for the individual parts, is the lowest position. The highest, most elevated position is given to those who are steadfastly aligned with the Complete Reality. "*Mayy ananyena bhavena bhaktim kurvanti ye drdham*": "One who has firm devotion for Me and sincerely worships Me, knows that, by worshipping Me, he serves all." Without worshipping Krsna, you cannot do good to any sentient beings of this world. The *sadhu* has this kind of knowledge. When we pour water on the roots of a tree, the whole tree is nourished. When we give food to the stomach, the whole body is nourished. The same holds true for "Acyuta Sri Hari": all are interconnected. Nobody can be detached. By serving Sri Hari, you serve all. This is actual service. This is the original quality of the *sadhu*. If this is absent, then he cannot be termed "*sadhu*". He may exhibit some sort of external quality, but that has no intrinsic value. When we have one-pointed devotion to Sri Krsna, all other qualities will come to us.

yasyasti bhaktir bhagavaty
akincana sarvair gunais tatra
samasate surah harav
abhaktasya kuto mahad-guna
mano-rathenasati dhavato
bahih (Srimad Bhagavatam
5.18.12)

All other qualities are present in one who has one-pointed devotion to Supreme Lord Sri Krsna. A person who is averse to Sri Krsna, who has no devotion, has no qualities. He is running after worldly things so how can he have any qualities? From where can he get these qualities? Qualities come from God. If you have one-pointed devotion to Sri Krsna, all the qualities will come to you. We think that we have become civilized in this world. How is this civilized? The so-called civilization of this world is a mere hypocrisy. If one acts in a hypocritical manner, exhibiting grand external behavior, then, in the Kali-yuga,

that is considered to be civilized. What is this civilization of Kali-yuga? We have something inside. Our behavior shows one thing but in the heart dwells something else. Outwardly, we shake a person's hand, but inwardly we want to kill that person. You will now find this sort of "civilization" in Kali-yuga. You will get actual civilization only from a *suddha bhakta*--a Vaisnava--who is one in his words and heart. Those who are "avaisnava" (not Vaisnava) behave hypocritically, with deceitfulness, displaying mere etiquette. They have no sincerity.

Take, for example, a small boy. He is very beautiful. As he plays here and there, he smears his body with dust and mud. But still, that boy is giving happiness to his parents. If he is decorated with beautiful clothes, then he becomes even more beautiful to them. But if the life leaves that body, and that dead body is decorated with all the most beautiful garments and ornaments, will that dead body give any happiness to the parents or any other person? All will be afraid at the sight of the dead body. When we do not have one-pointed devotion to Sri Krsna, there is no life in our existence. It is like a lifeless, dead body. By decorating your dead body, you cannot get satisfaction for yourself and you cannot give satisfaction to others. You are lifeless.

When you have one-pointed devotion to Sri Krsna, then actual qualities with intrinsic value will appear. Now, without devotion to the Supreme Lord, whatever qualities you may exhibit have no actual intrinsic value. It is an outward show only. It is not coming from within.

"*Mat-krte tyakta-karmanas*": In India, you will find that all human beings are not of the same status. There are differences. In one person, you will find *sattva-guna* predominating, in another *rajo-guna* predominating and in another, *tamo-guna*. So, they are advised to practice *varnasrama-dharma*, whereby they are encouraged to act according to their own ability and level of competence within the four *varnas* (*brahmana*, *ksatriya*, *vaisya* and *sudra*) and four *asramas* (*brahmacari*, *grhastha*, *vanaprastha* and *sannyasi*). If they relinquish this practice, they will be committing a sin. They will be violating the Vedic order. But, if they relinquish this for the service of Sri Krsna, it will be correct.

You will find, in the *Gita*, Krsna first told Arjuna, "Perform your work according to your own competency. Do not attempt to do the work of others

who are of a different nature." But ultimately, He says, "*Sarva-dharman parityajya, mam ekam saranam vraja*" (18.66). "Give up all the relative duties I have spoken about earlier and take absolute shelter of Me. You are my own person. You are related to Me. You are part of My own potency. I have hitherto advised you to act according to your own capacity, but you will obtain your actual, eternal welfare when you take absolute shelter of Me." When we take absolute shelter of the Supreme Lord, we will not be committing sin by giving up those relative duties. But, take careful note of the words, "*mat-krte*": for Me. "Performing household duties or *brahmacari* duties has become too difficult, so I have given them up." Thinking like this, you are committing sin. You are violating the Vedic injunctions. But if you take shelter of Supreme Lord Sri Krsna, then automatically you are performing service for all.

Generally, we refer to those who have given up their household life as *sadhus*. "I am married. I have a wife and children. I have no funds to maintain them. So, I have given up household life. I am moving along the road, begging. I have become a *sadhu*." He is not a *sadhu*. He is committing a sin. But if a person lives within household life, serving Krsna, then all the family members are benefited. "*Mat-krte tyakta-karmanas tyakta-svajana-bandhavah*": "for Me."

What are the original qualities of the *sadhu*? One is one-pointed devotion to the Supreme Lord and another is that you have to give up this *varnasrama-dharma* and bodily relations for the service of Sri Krsna. If you do this, then you are doing good to all. That is a *sadhu*. Another of the original qualities of the *sadhu* is that the *sadhu* only likes to hear and speak about Krsna:

mad-asrayah katha
mrstah srnvanti
kathayanti ca tapanti
vividhas tapa naitan
mad-gata-cetasah
(Srimad Bhagavatam, 3.25.23)

Why does the *sadhu* wish only to hear and speak about Krsna? When the *sadhu* does not have the company of his beloved Supreme Lord, how can he live? How can he survive? He survives by singing the glories of the Supreme Lord, always hearing about and remembering Him. That is the life and soul of the *sadhu*. No *sadhu* can survive without hearing and speaking about Krsna. It is like water to a fish. A fish cannot remain without water. Like that, without hearing about Krsna, without speaking about Krsna, without remembering

Krsna, a *sadhu* cannot survive. That is his very life. That quality must be present in him.
Having separation grief, he cannot remain without speaking about Krsna. That quality you must clearly be able to see: whether or not he has the taste to hear and speak about Krsna's Name, Form, Attributes, etc.

The *sadhu* cannot speak for money or some other ulterior motive. Then it is not *hari-katha*, as it is not for Krsna:

"You have given up everything. You have taken shelter of the Supreme Lord, but you have no belief! The Supreme Lord is maintaining and sustaining the whole universe--even all the beings who are averse to Him. If anybody takes shelter of Him, will he not be protected? Do you not have such belief? You have to take money for giving Him service? Hearing is devotional service. Speaking for the satisfaction of Sri Krsna is also devotion."

"But, if we take no money, then how shall we live?"

"Then let us die! If no one gives us food for our service and we die, then let us die! What is the use of having this sort of belief? God is maintaining the whole universe. He will not maintain me? Why should I ask for this?"

If a person goes to another's house and starts working for him, without demanding anything, how long will the master of the house remain silent? Two or three days go by without feeding him. The master thinks, "He is working for me. How can I eat without giving him something?" That person might be a very bad person, but the master does not consider this. If anybody acts on behalf of the Supreme Lord, will He not protect him? The Supreme Lord is All-Powerful. He maintains infinite brahmandas but does not give these worldly things to the devotees? So why should you accept money for speaking about the Supreme Lord. If you hear that sort of speech, then that person is speaking about the end, and that end is money.

For this reason, we should always remember Nrsimhadeva. Nrsimhadeva kills Hiranyakasipu. Who is Hiranyakasipu? "*Hiranya*" means wealth and "*kasipu*" means bed-- sexual desire. So "Hiranyakasipu" means "those who have desire for wealth and sex, and also for name and fame". Such persons cannot get Krsna. So, Hiranyakasipu is within us.
Externally, we may see a demon, but that demon is also residing within ourselves. That demon should be killed! Then you can go to Krsna. There is

also one-pointed, causeless, eternal devotion residing within our real selves. That is called "Prahlada". There is Prahlada, Nrsimha Bhagavan and *bhakti*. Nrsimha Bhagavan will remove all ulterior motives from our hearts. He will kill Hiranyakasipu and enhance Prahlada. So we should remember Lord Nrsimhadeva:

ito nrsimhah parato
nrsimha yato yato yami
tato nrsimha bahir
nrsimha hrdaye nrsimha
nrisimham adim saranam prapadye

The Real Touchstone

There was a Brahmin who was worshipping Lord Shiva. He was very poor and desired wealth. Lord Shiva appeared to him and told him, "If you want wealth, you should go to Vrindavana. On the banks of the river Yamuna is the Dvadasha-aditya tila. There you will find Sanatana Goswami. He has a sparsha-mani (touchstone). If you touch iron with that touchstone, it will turn it into pure gold. If you ask him, he will give it to you". The Brahmin very enthusiastically went to Vrindavana. He climbed up the Dvadasha-aditya tila and there was Sanatana Goswami, performing his bhajan. The Brahmin said, "Lord Shiva appeared to me and told me that you will give me a sparsha mani. Do you actually have one? Sanatana Goswami answered, "Yes I have one. Do you want it?" The Brahmin replied, "Yes", so Sanatana Goswami pointed and said, "It's over there." "Where?" asked the Brahmin. "There," replied Sanatana Goswami. "There? But that's a pile of rubbish," said the Brahmin. Sanatana Goswami then confirmed, "Yes, somewhere in that pile of dust and rubbish there is a sparsha - mani. If you can find it you can have it."

So the Brahmin looked through the rubbish, and sure enough, there it was-the touchstone!

Anything of iron, he touched would turn into gold. He was very happy. He was touching and getting gold. But Lord Shiva blessed him, and therefore, he had good intelligence. He began to think, "The whole world is looking for a touchstone like this. But Sanatana Goswami had it lying in a rubbish bin, so he must have something more valuable than this."

He went back and asked Sanatana, " Do you have something more valuable?" Sanatana Goswami replied, "Yes, I do have something millions of times more precious. Do you want it?" The Brahmin said, "Yes, please. I do." Sanatana Goswami then told him, " First take your touchstone and throw it into the Yamuna, because you cannot receive what I have until you are freed from all these other attachments." The Brahmin had faith in the words of a Sadhu. To get the treasure of Krishna Consciousness, there has to be a great leap of faith in the words of the Sadhu.

The Brahmin threw the touchstone into the river Yamuna, knowing that it would never be seen again. Sanatana Goswami said, "I will now give you a touchstone that will give you something greater than all the gold in creation. The greatest treasure is the treasure of Krishna - Prema. That treasure is lying dormant within your heart. There is only one means of achieving it; through the touchstone of the very sincere chanting of the Hare Krishna Mahamantra,

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare

Sanatana Goswami initiated him in the chanting of the Holy Names and he became the possessor of the ultimate wealth.

The rising of the sun of the Srimad Bhagavatam

The following is a translation of, *Hayanodghata*, the last article by Srila

Prabhupada published in *Gaudiya* magazine in Vaishakh of 1936.

"Gaudiya magazine today enters its fifteenth year. For fourteen years, Gaudiya has sung Goloka's incomparable glories just as Lakshman served Rama during His exile. May the readers and hearers of Gaudiya find eternal ecstasy in joyfully relishing the fruits born by this fifteen-year-old tree. We ask that everyone join us in praying for Lord Gaurasundar's mercy so that Gaudiya's message will soon spread to America. This message is being discussed in Europe, particularly in London, so why should America be left behind?

May Bhaktivinode Thakur's songs and transcendental literature, which contain the same essence as those of Narottam Das Thakur, be distributed in huge numbers throughout Bengal, Orissa and Assam. The translations of Sharanagati into Tamil and Chaitanya Sikshamrita into Telugu will certainly help the people of those regions find direction to the highest spiritual truth.

May the Tridandi sannyasis of Gaudiya Math bring joy to Gaudiya magazine. May Gaudiyas in every stage of life find firm faith in the service of Lord Chaitanya.

prithivite jata katha dharma name cale
bhagavata kahe taha paripurna chale

'Whatever is called religion in this world is said by the Bhagavatam to be a complete fraud'.

May this statement become the standard by which religions all over the world be measured. May the world's intelligentsia come to adore *Jaiva Dharma* and *Sri Chaitanya Sikshamrita*. May they then raise the victory flag of the truly non-sectarian religion and learn that Sri Krishna Chaitanya, Harinam and the book Bhagavata are identical with each other. May the Bengali devotees along with rest of the world's people hear, chant and study the Bhagavata. May this institution for Rupa Goswami's followers be eternally engaged in Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's service. May all fraudulent conclusions about spiritual life disappear like a fog from the heart of the human race with the rising of the sun of the Srimad Bhagavatam."

The Search for Happiness and the Root Cause of Affliction

The *jivas*, or the real selves, are the eternal servants of Sri Krsna. The cause of our affliction is forgetfulness of our relationship with Supreme Lord Sri Krsna. So we have to remember Him. How can we remember Him? If we can always remember Krsna then there will be no more difficulty. He is All-Existence, All-Knowledge, All-Bliss and this worldly existence is just the opposite-it is the shadow of the internal potency of Supreme Lord Sri Krsna. When we become averse we see the shadow. The shadow of a tree resembles the tree, but in the shadow of the tree there is no substance. In the tree there is substance. Similarly, the Supreme Lord, Sri Krsna is All-Substantiality. But when we become averse to Him, we see nescience before us, devoid of existence, devoid of knowledge, and devoid of happiness.
But we perceive it to be eternal. As Brahma says:

tasmad idam jagad asesam asat-svarupam
svapnabham asta-dhisanam puru-duhkha-
duhkham tvayy eva nitya-sukha-bhodha-
tanav anante mayata udyad api yat sad
ivavabhati
(Srimad Bhagavatam, 10. 14. 22)

The entire material cosmos, not just this world, is non-eternal, perishable. It is like a dream. At the time of seeing a dream, we think it to be reality. When we awaken from a dream, we realize it was all false. Like this, everything we are seeing of these non-eternal relations is a dream. We are laughing, we are crying, etc. But when we wake up from it we shall see that it is all nothing.

"Svapnabham asta-dhisanam:" Brahma says that if we engage our intellect in matter, in non-eternal things, in order to get material development, then our intelligence will be finished. Yet we think that it is a very wise person who is dedicating his energy to cultivate material development. We say, "You are wise." But here Brahma says that this person's knowledge will be finished: *asta-dhisanam*. Instead of happiness, he is getting severe miseries. Everyone wants happiness. Yes, he is trying to find happiness, but he is misdirected. Being averse to Sri Krsna, he is going towards the mirage: "If I get this or that

thing, I shall be happy." This world seems to eternally exist, it seems to possess knowledge and it seems therefore, to possess happiness. But it is in fact devoid of existence, devoid of knowledge and devoid of happiness.

If we churn water will we get butter? We think that by churning water, we shall get butter. Someone says to us, "there is no ingredient in the water by which you will get butter. All your efforts are a waste of time." We answer, "No, you have lost your mind. I shall go on churning for thousands of births!" If you churn yogurt or milk, then you can make butter. This world is devoid of existence, devoid of knowledge and devoid of happiness. If you devote all your energy to this world, you will be in want of existence, in want of knowledge and in want of happiness. Krsna is the embodiment of All-Existence, All-Knowledge and All-Bliss. We should worship Sri Krsna. In the Gita, Krsna says:

anityam asukham
lokam imam prapya
bhajasva mam
(Bhagavad-gita, 9.33)

"You have forgotten Me and thus you have come to this non-eternal world." So start worshipping Him.

In this regard, our Param Pujyapada Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja gave one example. Once the emperor of heaven, Devaraja Indra, had committed a great offence for which his gurudeva cursed him to take birth as a hog. Immediately, he became a hog and the throne of heaven was vacated. The demigods became disturbed and approached Brahma for assistance. "Who will govern us?" they asked. "Our emperor has become a hog. Our gurudeva has cursed him." So Brahma said, "All right, let me go and fix the situation." Then Brahma came to the world. Being omniscient, he recognized Indra in the body of a particular hog. This hog was surrounded by his wife and many piglets. Brahma said, "O My dear sir, you are not a hog! You are the emperor of heaven! Why have you come here?
Come along! Take the throne and govern your kingdom of heaven." Then the hog replied, "Who are you? I do not believe your words. I have such a nice, beautiful wife and children. I have so much responsibility. I cannot go." In the same way, Supreme Lord Sri Krsna appears in this world and asks, "What

are you doing here?"

sarva-dharman
parityajya mam ekam
saranam vraja aham
tvam sarva-papebhyo
moksayisyami ma
sucah (Bhagavad-gita,
18.66)

"Give up all these material things and take absolute shelter of Me. I shall rescue you from all sins." But we say, "Why have you come here? Who are you?" We don't believe Him. Out of affection He comes to us, but we say, "Who are you? I have such a nice wife and children. I cannot give up these attachments, I have so much responsibility."

We have forgotten Him. So we have to remember Krsna. How do we remember Him? In this Kali-yuga, if we try to remember Sri Krsna by meditation, which is prescribed for Satya-yuga, the golden age, we will not be able to remember. Our minds are very restless,
dwelling on the non-eternal things of the world. Impressions of lakhs (100,000) and lakhs of births are stored in the mind. There are four kinds of piety: *tapah, saucam, daya,* and *satyam* (austerity, cleanliness, mercy and truthfulness). In Treta-yuga, when one of these four (*tapah*) had become diminished, it was not possible to practice meditation. Then sacrifice to Lord Visnu was prescribed. If you have attachment for worldly things, you should give those worldly things for the service of Bhagavan Sri Krsna. In this way, you can concentrate on the ultimate target of worship. This could be accomplished in Satya-yuga by meditation, and in Treta-yuga by sacrifice.

In Dvapara-yuga, two kinds of piety had become diminished, *tapah* and *saucam*. People became more influenced by the senses and became incapable of uttering mantras correctly. Thus, they could not perform sacrifice. So the people of this era were told, "You should worship the Deity and engage all the senses and the objects of the senses in this way." All *indriyas,* all gross and subtle senses, including the mind, should be engaged in the service of Sri Krsna. If you serve the Deity, you have dedicated all the sense organs and all the objects of the sense organs. The purpose of this is to develop concentration on the object of devotion.

But in Kali-yuga we cannot perform Deity worship because we are diseased. A diseased person is prohibited from Deity worship. We are incapable of rising early in the morning. We cannot sit in the temple for a long time. Two or three hours are required for worship. After half an hour, we become distracted. We are diseased, so how can we worship? There is one *sloka*:

krte yad dhyayato
visnum tretayam
yajato makhaih
dvapara
paricaryayam kalau
tad dhari-kirtanat
(Srimad Bhagavatam, 12.3.52)

"Whatever benefit human beings received in Satya-yuga by meditation, in Treta-yuga by sacrifice and in Dvapara-yuga by Deity worship, they can receive in Kali-yuga by the chanting of the Holy Name."

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu appeared to teach us:

harer nama harer nama harer namaiva
kevalam kalau nasty eva nasty eva nasty
eva gatir anyatha (Brhan-naradiya
Purana, 38.97)

"*Harer nama harer nama harer nama*." Thrice it is said to give emphasis. This means, "Yes! You should do it! You should do it! You should do it!" Harinama! If anybody says you should perform meditation, the reply is, "No! Harinama!" By practicing *pranayama*, etc., "No! Harinama!" By oblations, "No! Harinama!" This verse says "No! Harinama!" thrice and "only Harinama, nothing else." "*Kalau nasty eva nasty eva nasty eva*." There is no other way, no other way, no other way-thrice-in this Kali-yuga.

God has appeared as His Name. All strength has been given to His Name to rescue the fallen souls of this Kali-yuga. You have to accept the instructions of the Supreme Lord. Sri Krsna, in the mood Srimati Radharani, appeared as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and preached that by means of Sri Nama Saмkirtana, we can obtain Krsna-prema. We have been born into this Kali-yuga. Unlike the other prior yugas, Satya, Treta and Dvapara, there are three kinds of adharmas

(a lack of tapah, saucam and daya) in this era. Only one dharma remains: satyam. Satya is the Holy Name. Yet, we can easily get Krsna in this Kali-yuga because the Lord has graced the fallen souls of this era and given them the easiest way.

The Served and the servant

One day, Srila Rupa Goswami invited Srila Sanatan Goswami to come and eat with him. For this occasion, he wished to prepare sweet rice, but he did not have the necessary ingredients. Srimati Radharani took the form of a young cowherd girl and to Srila Rupa with milk, sugar, rice and ghee, in short giving him everything he needed to make the preperation for Srila Sanatan's pleasure. Srila Rupa Goswami cooked the sweet rice and after offering it to the deity, gave the prasad to Srila Sanatan.

Srila Sanatan found that after relishing the delicious sweet rice, he was overcome by uncontrollable waves of ecstasy. Suspecting that something unusual had taken place, he asked Srila Rupa where the ingredients had come from? When Srila Rupa told him about the little cowherd girl, Srila Sanatan immediately realized that this had been Srimati Radhaji. Because Srimati Radha was their Goddess and they were Her servants, the proper relation of served and servant had been reversed. He therefore strictly forbade Srila Rupa Goswami from accepting such gifts in the future.
On 07 Sep 08.

The Superexcellent Radha Kunda

Both Sri Radha-kunda and Sri Syama-kunda are in the area of Bahulavana. Approximately 3 miles north of Govardhana is a village called Aarita. This is the place where both ponds appeared. To exhibit His eternal pastimes filled with ambrosial nectarean prema, Lord Krishna killed the demon Aristasur here, who had taken the form of a bull. Afterwards, He wished to touch Radharani, but She rebuked Him saying that He could not touch Her with His impure hands since He had killed a bull. She told Him to purify Himself by bathing in all the holy places before touching Her.

Krishna said: “I shall bathe in the water of all the holy places by calling them all together at this spot.” He stomped on the earth and created a depression which immediately filled up the water of all the holy places. The personification of each holy place also appeared before Krishna, and introduced themselves while praising Him in different ways. In view of Radha and the Gopis, Krishna then took a bath in the water while uttering the name of each holy place.

These events occurred during the month of Kartik, at midnight of the eighth day of the dark moon. That is how Syama Kunda appeared. Then Krishna joked with Radha, which lead to the digging of a pond on the west shore of Syama-kunda by Radha, and Her friends. This amazed Krishna. However, there was only one problem—there was no water present in the large new pond and, therefore, no holy place! All the girls were wondering what they should now do. Then Krishna offered them water from Syama-kunda. Performing the pastime of arrogance, the cowherd damsels replied that He had washed away His sin of killing the demon Arista and this had now made the water impure. Thus it was of no use to them.

Radharani further told Krishna that She and Her friends would bring water from Manasi Ganga to fill this Radha Sarovara. Hearing all this, Krishna indicated to the personifications of all the holy places that they should go to Radha and Her friends to offer their prayers and requests. This pleased Radha and She instructed them to enter into Her pond. Immediately water from Syama-kunda broke its barrier and began flowing toward Radha-kunda, filling it very rapidly. Thus, Radha-kunda appeared.
At present we can still see the broken edges of the banks between the two ponds. Through these broken banks, water from both ponds keeps on flowing from one point to the other. Only those devotees, who are greatly blessed by Sri Krishna to hear from a spiritual master in the lineage of Srila Rupa Goswami, who is

established in madhurya rasa with Sri Krishna, can understand the sweetness and meaning of this pastime. People under illusion or those engaged in material activities cannot understand this. These ponds are surrounded by various trees and creepers and are the scene of the most amazing and playful transcendental pastimes of the eternally youthful Sri Radha and Sri Krishna.

(Translated by Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj from Sri Vraja Mandala Parikrama, written by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur, 1932)
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Quotes Compiled on Radha Kund (from Vraja Mandala Parikrama)

Srila Prabhupada used to instruct his disciples by referring to Sri Upadesamrita by Srila Rupa Goswami:

bhaktiman jana haite premanistha
premanistha haite gopi sriharir prestha
gopi haite sriradhika Krishna priyatma
se radha-sarsi priya haya tar sma
se kunda asraya cchadi kona murkha jana
anyatra vasiya caya harir sevana

"Radha Kunda is as dear to Krishna as Srimati Radha is. Most elevated devotees of Krishna always tend to take shelter of Radhakunda."
Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupada also always considered Radha Kunda as non-different from Srimati Radha (thus he never entered the pond.) He used to sprinkle water of the pond over his head and pay obeisances. A materialist cannot see or experience the transcendence of this place. Their dip at this place is totally different from a dip by a devotee. Srila Prabhupada wrote: 'It is very rare for devotees serving Krishna as servant, friend or parent to take a dip at Radha Kunda, what to speak of materialists'.

vaikunthaj janito vara madhu-puri tatrapi rasotsavad

vrindaranyam udara-pani-ramanat tatrapi govardhanah
radha-kundam ihapi gokula-pateh premamritaplavanat
kuryad asya virajato giri-tate sevam viveki na kah
(Sri Upadesamrita 9th verse)

Among all the holy places, Sri Radha-kunda is best. This is the purport of the 9th Verse of Sri Upadesamrita. The holy place known as Mathura is spiritually superior to Vaikuntha, the transcendental world, because Lord Krishna appeared there. Superior to Mathura-puri is the transcendental forest of Vrindavana due to the fact that Krishna's rasa-lila pastimes were performed there. Even superior to the forest of Vrindavana is Govardhana Hill, for it was raised by the Divine Hand of Sri Krishna and was the site of His various loving pastimes. And, above all, the superexcellent Sri Radha-kunda stands supreme, for it is overflowed with the ambrosial nectarean prema of the Lord of Gokula, Sri Krishna. Where, then, is that intelligent person who is unwilling to serve this divine Radha-kunda, which is situated at the foot of Govardhana Hill?

The taste of transcendence at every step

When our Math was on Rasbihari Avenue in Calcutta, there was a person who used to attend regularly to hear religious discourses, even in inclement weather. Other persons might not show up, but he would always come. We would praise him, "You have a good taste for spiritual things." After hearing discourses continuously for eight or nine months, that person suddenly stopped coming to the Math. We asked some of the other people who attended the discourse, "Where is he? What is the matter?" They said, "We have seen him, but we do not know his address." We thought that perhaps he had left Calcutta, or perhaps he was ill or otherwise indisposed. We had no way to contact him. But, one day, by Lord's desire, while I was going through the streets of Calcutta, I met him.

'Oh,' I said, "We have been deprived of your company for a long time. Were you

not here in Calcutta?"

"No," he said, "I have always been here."

"Then, why have you not been coming? Have you been ill?"

"No," he said, "I have been to your place. I have heard everything. Your only advice is 'worship Krishna, worship Krishna, perform *harinam'*. If there is some new thing, then I shall come again. I've already heard it all."

So, there is no new thing. You have to do *harinam*. This person attended the meetings for intellectual simulation, not for *bhajan*. If he had come to the temple with the desire to perform worship, the God's grace would have come to him and at every step he would have found a new taste of ambrosia - a taste of the transcendental. No aspect of transcendental things can become stale. *Prasadam* cannot become stale. The glories of transcendental cannot become stale. On 07 April 08.

Two Holy Men and the Woman

Two saints were walking on a road. They came to a chest-deep river, which had no bridge. As they were about to wade through, a pregnant woman came up and asked, "Sadhuji, please carry me across to the other side. " So the sadhu looked at the other saint who said, "Oh! Don't do it. We are sadhus, what do we have to do with women?" The first sadhu then said, "That's right, but this poor lady is pregnant." The reply to this was, " Well, pregnant or not, it is no business of ours." So then the other sadhu said, "Anyway, I will help her." "Well! if you want to fall into maya then don't let me stop you."

So the first sadhu carried her across the river on her shoulders. They crossed the river, and when they had reached the other side he put her down and the sadhus

and the woman went their own separate ways. They walked for two miles without talking. Then the other sadhu said, " It was very bad that you carried that lady across the Ganges on your shoulders. Very bad." The first sadhu then said, "I only carried her across the river, but you are still carrying her. Why don't you drop her? We have walked two miles already. I forgot her when I put her down, but all this time in your mind its just been, - Lady, Lady, Lady." On 15 July 07.

Two sides of Prema - union and separation

Krishna is The Predominating Aspect of the moiety and Srimati Radhika is The Predominated Aspect of the moiety. Moiety means one of the two parts of a thing. There are two sides of Prema - union and separation. Prema in separation bestows much more happiness than Prema in union. This Prema is called 'Adhirurha Mahabhava' here manifestation of the Object of Worship (Krishna's Sweet Form) is more than that caused by union.

For that reason Nandanandana Krishna appeared in Kaliyuga as Gauranga (inside Krishna, outside Radha) taking the mode of worship of Radha and Her complexion to taste His own extraordinary sweetness which She has tasted, sweetness of Prema in separation 'vipralamba rasa'. As well as to perform the pastimes of the Most Munificent Form of Godhead, to distribute the highest Prema 'unnata ujjwala rasa', to all irrespective of caste, creed and nationality. Radharani's Prema is the purest and highest. She is most magnanimous. She is prepared to sacrifice everything for the satisfaction of Krishna.

na gani apana duhkha, sabe vanchi tanra sukha,
tanra sukha amara tatparya
more yadi diya duhkha, tanra haila maha-sukha,
sei duhkha mora sukha-varya

"I do not consider my grief. I only want His satisfaction. My only object is His

contentment. If by giving pain to me, He is highly delighted, that pang will be my greatest blessedness."

Holy Name, Vigraha (Deity) and Original Transcendental Form are identical as All are Saccidananda- All-Existence, All-Knowledge and All-Bliss. Name and Named, body and the possessor of the body are non-different in Krishna. A conditioned soul's name, body and real self are different. But Krishna's Holy Name, Form and Pastimes are non-different. For that reason, those cannot be apprehended by material sense-organs but can only be realized through revelation, upon submission to the bona fide preceptorial channel. On 07 Sep 08.

Understanding Sreemad Bhagwad Geeta

Sreemad Bhagwad Geeta is universally adored name and scripture. It is commonly known to everyone across the globe. But the difficulity is, there are thousands of commentaries on the Geeta, and in these commentaries the commentators have expressed their own views. They all have different views and ordinary people are confused about the actual message of Sreemad Bhagwad Geeta.

The speaker of the Geeta is the Supreme Lord, Sri Krishna. Only those who have entered into the heart of Sri Krishna can understand the real implication and significance of His sayings and the purpose of His speech and advice. Outside people cannot understand.

In India, and outside India, you will find many people who say -- We do not believe Krishna is Supreme Lord because He took birth and, therefore, He was a human being. He may have many powers, perhaps even superhuman powers. He may even be a great politician, a great diplomat. But He is still only a human being.

Even those who have gone through the Geeta may also speak like this. It is most astounding. When I ask them -- Have you gone through the Geeta? The reply is -- Oh, yes.

I ask them -- How! If you have gone through the Geeta, then you should accept the teachings of the Geeta.

Supreme Lord Sri Krishna mentions in Sreemad Bhagwad Geeta (7.7) --There is nothing superior to Me.

With emphasis, Sri Krishna says that He is the Supreme Lord. We read the Geeta, but we do not believe the teachings of Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. Why is this? He also says in the Geeta (9.24) -- I am the only Master and the only Enjoyer of all yajnas (sacrifices).

There are many verse in Sreemad Bhagwad Geeta substantiating Sri Krishna as Supreme Lord.

In the Geeta (10.8), He says -- I am the cause of all creation, the origin of all the things.

In verse (14.27), He says -- I am the cause of the impersonal formless God (Brahm). That impersonal, formless God is the halo of own light of Sri Krishna, emanating from Sri Krishna Himself. And so on.

Sri Krishna is the Supreme Lord. How can we know the Supreme Lord? Without His grace, no one can know Him. If anybody says -- Yes. I can know Him, then he will be equal to or greater than the Supreme Lord. But the Supreme Lord, Infinite and Absolute, is One. Nothing can be outside the Infinite. If you say -- This flower is outside the Infinite, then the Infinite becomes finite. Even particle of dust cannot be outside the Infinite, or the Absolute will lose His position. The Absolute is One. The only way to get Him is to take absolute shelter at His Lotus Feet and to act according to His will. There is no other way to get Him except by means of exclusive, pure devotion.

Therefore, only those who have surrendered to Sri Krishna, who have access to the heart of Sri Krishna, can understand the implication and significance of His teachings. Those without knowledge of Sri Krishna, who have not submitted to Sri Krishna, how can they know. They may write many commentaries, but they

cannot comprehend the actual significance of the teachings of Sri Krishna.

Even Sri Arjuna took the shelter unto Sri Krishna, means he also surrendered unto Sri Krishna, before he was imparted with this divine knowledge. He says in the Geeta (2.7) -- I have lost my natural valour. I am bewildered and cannot ascertain what is right and what is wrong. I submit to you. I am your disciple. Please advise me regarding my eternal welfare.

(From the lectures of His Divine Grace Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj)

Utthana Ekadasi, 1967

On 25 November 1967 (Sri Utthana ekadasi), Sri Vyasa-Puja was observed, marking the holy appearance day of Srila Gurudeva. In the morning, Srila Gurudeva and His spiritual associates bathed in the Ganga at the point where the river is broad and wide and in all her majesty. Then, Srila Gurudeva Himself went to the temple sanctuary and after observing the rituals of abhisheka and shodashopachar of Sri Vigraha Sri Guru-Gauranga-Radha-Nayananatha-Jiu, greeted His spiritual godbrothers reverentially with sandalwood paste, flower garlands and robes.

For the pleasure of His followers, Srila Gurudeva then seated Himself while Tridandi Swami Srimad Bhakti Lalita Giri Maharaja made offerings and performed puja. One by one, the monks and householder devotees reverentially offered flowers at the lotus feet of Srila Gurudeva. In the evening, at a special session, Srila Gurudeva addressed the gathering as follows:

Today, Utthana Ekadasi, is also the tithi (lunar day) when we worship our predecessor acharya, Srimad Gaura Kisora Dasa Babaji Maharaja, for it is his disappearance day. You have heard a great deal about Babaji Maharaja’s

transcendental activities and teachings from the venerable Puri Maharaja. As I utter his name, I beg for his blessings, and I also pray for the blessings of my Guru Maharaja, who is non-different from him.

Coincidentally, this also happens to be my own birthday. Those who love me have taken this opportunity to give me their profuse blessings. Who is such a fool that he will not accept blessings when they are given? Who will not take the opportunity to make spiritual advancement when it comes? I therefore humbly accept all of your blessings. May every one of my senses be constantly engaged in the service of Krishna and His devotees by your mercy. It is the custom for those in the renounced order to worship the guru on their own birthday. So, today, I make this my personal duty.
I have three types of guru: (1) The word guru (gu+ru) means “the destroyer of ignorance.” The embodiment of unlimited knowledge is the Lord Himself, Whose appearance destroys all ignorance. The Lord Himself is thus the root of the truth that is guru. (2) The second type is he who personally attracted and engaged me in the service of the Lord, who is himself another form of the Lord. This is he who founded the worldwide Caitanya Mathas and Gaudiya Mathas, my Gurudeva, Nitya- lila-pravishta Prabhupada Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Goswami Thakura. (3) Thirdly, all the Vaishnavas are my gurus.

What do the Vaishnavas do? Just as it is the guru’s job to constantly engage the disciple in the service of the supreme object of service–the Supreme Lord, so the Vaishnavas keep us engaged in the service of any aberrant behavior. If we deviate in any way, they will catch us. So I also include my disciples amongst my gurus.
Today, my disciples performed kirtana and worshipped me as their guru. By listening to their kirtana, I worshipped them. If by listening I had any untoward motives, if I had accepted it for my own sake, then there would have been no puja (worship). Just as kirtana is a devotional activity, listening (sravana) is also a devotional activity. However we express it, they are all my masters whom I must serve. But even though they are my masters—the objects of my service—the great affection I have for them compels me to instruct them, to take care of and protect them in the same way that Yasoda and Nanda punished, instructed and took care of Gopala.

When Yasoda bound little Gopala to the mortar, she did not do so because she considered Him to be the object of her service; she did it because she considered Him to be her child. The object of service can be the one who protects and also

the one who is protected; the one who takes care of and also the one who is taken care of. Therefore, both attitudes are found in a pure devotee.

It not hypocrisy on the part of the guru; when he calls his disciple prabhu, or master, he means it. On the other hand, when the situation necessitates it and the other mood comes upon him, he disciplines his disciple. From one vantage point, the spiritual master is a disciplinarian; from another, he is the disciple's dearmost friend and well-wisher.

I am most grateful to all those who have blessed me today. May the result of their blessings be that my every thought and instinct be directed toward the service of Krishna and His devotees. And if anyone was really worshipping me, then he should know that he has in fact worshipped my spiritual master, who is the real object of worship. Service to the guru is service to God.

- Excerpted from The Holy Life of Nityalilapravishta Om 108 Sri Srimad Bhakti Dayita Madhava Gosvami Maharaja Vishnupada written by Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj

Vaishnavas have got no vanity

Our Most Revered Gurudeva occasionally warned us by saying that after the disappearance of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and His personal associates as well as the prominent Vaishnav Acharyas Narottam Thakur, Shyamananda Prabhu and Srinivas Acharya etc., darkness descended on the horizon of Shuddha Bhakti and many pseudo sects cropped up. The renowned saint Totaram Das Babaji Maharaj mentioned thirteen pseudo sects— `Aula, baula, karttabhaja, neda, daravesa, sani, sahajiya, sakhibheki, smarta, jata-gosani ativadi, cudadhari, gauranga-nagari, tota kahe ei tera sanga nahi kori'. Sincere aspirants should be careful to avoid association of the pseudo sects. Each of the pseudo sects try to establish that they are actually preaching Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's teachings but

actually they are defaming, disrespecting and tarnishing the teachings of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Our Guruvarga refuted their contentions with strong words so that sincere souls would not be misled and deprived of getting actual spiritual devotional benefit. A novice, beginner, may be cheated. But at the same time, they gave a warning to us - don't attack the persons who are preaching pseudo sects out of personal grudge. We are not to attack any person in this world as he is from Krishna, by Krishna and in Krishna. Sadhus have got no personal grudge to anybody in this world. But for the eternal benefit of all they refute the anti-devotional contentions only to save sincere souls from being misled. If we attack those proponents with hostile mentality, those bad qualities of the pseudo sects will revert to us and we will have a spiritual fall. Even if followers of those protagonists come to the sadhus, they pay respect to them and serve them with prasad because they have got no personal grudge. If they sincerely want to hear pure devotional conclusive thoughts, sadhus speak to them mildly, establish devotional thoughts and show the defects of anti-devotional thoughts. But they remain silent when they find the person has come not to hear sincerely but to show pedantic fits. Shuddha Bhaktas do not like idle talks. They have no desire to speak unnecessarily because they want to engage themselves fully for the service of God and His devotees. They know any moment they may leave this most perishable world. They are completely disinterested in non-eternal worldly affairs. Real aspirants utilise their time for their actual benefit, and they have no time to find faults and criticize others.

Vaishnava is Paramhansa. As a swan can extract milk from a mixture of water and milk, Vaishnavas can see good qualities in human beings. Human beings have both good and bad qualities in them. When good qualities predominate he is called good and when bad qualities predominate he is called bad person. Emancipated realised souls have only good qualities. They are the rarest in this world. The vaishnava has got the capacity to see good qualities in all human beings. They have got no propensity to see bad qualities. They see bad qualities in themselves. When a votary sees his own bad qualities, he can rectify himself. Vaishnavas have got no vanity or pride. They give respect to all but do not aspire for getting respect from others.

The root cause is false ego and false interests. The material world is finite. So if anybody gets some property others are deprived of it. When human beings are taught that they are physical bodies, they all try to get requirements of the body

and compete against one another for this. Actually the real self is neither physical body nor material body. Being enveloped by the material energy they wrongly misconceive. So the Indian rishis first tried for material property and afterwards they found it would lead to extreme suffering. Actually the requirement is Complete Bliss, Who is God - Purna-sukh - Absolute Bliss or Infinite Bliss. Infinite Sachchidananda is Infinite Bliss. If the attention of human beings is diverted towards Infinite bliss and if anybody gets this Absolute Bliss others will not be deprived of it. According to differential calculus mathematics - Infinity minus Infinity is Infinity. Infinite jivas can get Infinite bliss. There is no possibility of clashing. When persons lost their interest for material acquisitions, they become indifferent to it and clashing with others for such things cannot occur.

As long as we shall remain in this world, we should be satisfied by getting minimum material possessions. Atma requires Atma for it's sustenance, not Anatma. Anatma is foreign to it. If one attains the property of one whole world, he will have the desire to get another. The material world is actually devoid of genuine bliss. The material world is the shadow of the Supreme Lord - who is All-Existence, All-Knowledge and All-Bliss. The material world is the outcome of Maya which means 'not that'. Similarly the shadow of a tree has got no actual existence.

tasmad idam jagad asesam asat-svarupam
svapnabham asta-dhisanam puru-duhkha-duhkham
tvayy eva nitya-sukha-bodha-tanav anante
mayata udyad api yat sad ivavabhati
Srimad Bhagavatam 10.14.22

This entire universe is non-eternal, so it is dream-like (illusory), transitory (not permanent), devoid of knowledge, inert and extremely painful. But O Lord Krishna! You are All-Existence, All-Knowledge and All-Bliss and therefore Infinite. The entire universe has been created and destroyed by your inconceivable power, yet it appears to be truth actually existing.

The Supreme Lord is Supreme in all aspects. He is Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent and He is All-Bliss. By the grace of Absolute Bliss we can get complete bliss. Grace descends to a surrendered soul. All desires of the votary will be fulfilled if he takes unconditional total submission to the Supreme Lord.

Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur has written—

manasa, deha, geha, yo kichu mora, arpilun tuya pade nanda-kisora!
sampade vipade, jivane-marane, day mama gela, tuwa o-pada barane
marobi rakhobihjo iccha tohara, nitya-dasa prati tuwa adhikara

O Supreme Lord Sri Krishna! You can kill me or protect me. You can do whatever you want. You have got every right over your eternal servant.

Vamana Avatara

The fifth among the dasavatara is Sri Vamana avatara. There are innumerable incarnations. Among them, there are 25 chief incarnations of which Sri Vamanadeva is the 18th incarnation. All lila-avataras were mentioned in the previous description of Matsya avatara. Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha are the original catur-vyuha, or four- handed forms of Sri Krishna in Dvaraka. They are prabhava-vilasa of Sri Krishna. The majestic expansion of Sri Krishna, Narayana, who is in Vaikuntha, also has His catur-vyuha, which is known as the second catur-vyuha. Each of these four forms again expand into three forms. Pradyumna has three forms known as Trivikrama, Vamana and Sridhara. The second catur-vyuha has three each, which totals twelve, and these are the deities of the twelve months. The deity of the month of Asvin (Asadha) is Sri Vamanadeva. Vaisnavas draw twelve hari-mandiras (temples) on their bodies. Among them, the hari-mandira on the left side is the residing place of Vamanadeva. In the spiritual sky, the catur-vyuha and their twenty vilasa forms are differentiated by the position of their weapons. Sri Vamanadeva holds the conch, disk, mace and lotus. Kesava resides in Mathura, Jagannatha in Nilacala, Madhava in Prayag, Madhusudana in Mandara; Vasudeva, Padmanabha, and Janardana in Anandaranya, Vardaraja Visnu in Visnu Kanchi, and Hari in Mayapur. Similarly, Vamanadeva also has a dwelling place in the universe. One day of Brahma or

one kalpa consists of 14 manvantaras (each manvantara consists of 71 cycles of the four yugas). The 14 incarnations of the Supreme Lord in these 14 manvantaras are known as manvantara- avataras. Sri Vamana avatara is the incarnation in the Vaivasvata or seventh manvantara.

In the 8th canto of the Srimad Bhagavatam, Srila Krishna Dvaipayana Vedavyasa Muni has given detailed descriptions of Lord Vamanadeva's pastimes of appearance, capturing of the three planetary systems from Bali Maharaja on the pretext of asking for only three steps of land, and later awarding him the Sutala planet. A short description of these topics is given here. Describing the reigns of the fourteen Manus (Svayambhuva, Svarocisa, Uttama, Tamasa, Raivata, Caksusa, Vaivasvata, Savarni, Daksasavarni, Brahma-savarni, Dharma- savarni, Rudra-savarni, Deva-savarni and Indra-savarni), Sri Sukadeva Goswami mentions about the pastime of Bali and Vamandeva during the reign of Savarni Manu of the eighth manvantara. Once when Bali Maharaja was the head of the demons, the king of the demigods, Indra, killed Bali Maharaja and his chief generals in a fight between the demigods and the demons. When Indra began killing the demons with the vow of destroying the existence of the whole demon lineage, grandfather Brahma came to know about it and sent Narada Rsi to Indra to stop him from such a ghastly task. When Narada Rsi told Indra about the order of Brahma to stop killing the demons, only then did he stop.

The family priest of the demons, Sukracarya, revived Bali Maharaja, his chief generals and demons, using the art of mrt-samjivani. For the benefit of the demons, Sukracarya advised Bali Maharaja to arrange for the Visvajit-yajna to be performed by brahmanas of the Bhrgu lineage. Bali Maharaja, following the order of his spiritual master, collected the ingredients for the sacrifice. Sukracarya and the brahmana descendants of Bhrgu performed the sacrifice systematically. Various kinds of weapons including an inexhaustible quiver were produced in the sacrifice. Bali Maharaja became greatly powerful by the power of the mantras and attacked the heavenly planets with his army of demons. When the demigods informed Devaraja Indra about this, he came prepared with his army to fight. However on seeing the splendor of Bali Maharaja, fighting was out of the question as Indra did not even have the courage to stand before him. Then the worried and frightened Indra approached his spiritual master Brhaspati and inquired about the amazing strength of the demons. "What is the reason behind this extraordinary power of the demons?" he asked. Brhaspati, the spiritual master of the demigods, replied, "The brahmana descendants of Bhrgu, who are dear to Sri Hari, are

behind Bali Maharaja. Bali Maharaja has become powerful by the yajna performed by them. If you go to fight at this time, you will not be able to win. You will surely be badly defeated. Therefore my advice to you is that you give up your kingdom of heaven and hide in the sky."

On the advice of their guru Brhaspati, Indra and the other demigods left heaven and began to live secretly in the sky. Aditi*, the mother of the demigods, became very sad to see her sons without a kingdom and living in such a condition. She stopped eating and drinking and became weak. Being sorrowful all the time and indifferent to all the house work, her house lost its beauty. Mother Aditi anxiously began to wait for her husband Kasyapa Rsi, who was engaged in performing austerities. A long time later, Kasyapa Rsi returned home after finishing his austerities. Surprised at seeing the lusterless house and a weak and pale wife, he asked Aditi about the reason. Aditi replied to her husband while crying, "The demons have driven our sons from the kingdom of heaven. This is my prayer to your lotus feet: Please do something so that my sons can return to their kingdom. Until my sons regain the kingdom of heaven, my sorrow will not be removed." Hearing the inappropriate words of his wife, he tried to pacify her by speaking the essence of supreme truth. He said, "The demigods are our friends and demons are our enemy; this vision of the duality of enemy and friend only happens to those who are illusioned by the maya of the Supreme Lord. Because of forgetfulness of the Supreme Lord, people have opposite knowledge of their own and others' real constitutional position.

"In relation to the Supreme Lord, we have affectionate relations with all. Pure vision with knowledge does not have the vision of enmity. My advice to you is that you give up bodily misidentifications and false relations, and worship Hari with full dedication." Mother Aditi took the teachings of her husband, which were full of knowledge, to her heart. However, she repeatedly began requesting for her sons to again achieve their kingdom of heaven. Mother Aditi said that until her sons regained heaven, her mind could not have any kind of peace. It seems from these words of mother Aditi that like a materially entangled jiva (living being), illusioned by maya, she is grieved by affection for her sons and repeatedly requesting heaven for them. But this is not the reality.

In reality, the Supreme Lord wanted to appear as the son of Sage Kasyapa and mother Aditi to oblige them. He was inspiring mother Aditi and making her speak like this.

Kasyapa Rsi attentively heard the words of mother Aditi and said to his wife, "If it is your strong desire that the demigods return to their kingdom of heaven, then you have to perform the Kesava Tosana Vrata (fast to please Kesava) for twelve days by drinking only milk.
Nobody other than Lord Kesava can fulfill this desire of yours." As per the instructions of Kasyapa Rsi, mother Aditi performed the Kesava Tosana Vrata undergoing severe austerity and according to the proper customs. At the end of the fast, the Lord appeared before mother Aditi and assured her that He would appear as her son at a proper time under auspicious indications, and He would fulfill her desire.

At an auspicious time, the Lord appeared in the heart of Kasyapa Rsi. Kasyapa then initiated Aditi with that knowledge. The Lord first appeared in the heart of Aditi and then entered into her womb. When Brahma and other demigods realised that the Supreme Personality of Godhead had appeared, they began to offer prayers to the womb. On the twelfth day of the month of Sravana, at the very auspicious moment of the Abhijit star, Lord Narayana appeared from the womb of Aditi. He was holding a conchshell, club, lotus and disc. He had a blackish bodily hue and He was dressed in yellow garments.

Sage Kasyapa and mother Aditi saw that the Lord had appeared before them in a four- handed form, from which He miraculously transformed into the form of a dwarf (Vamana). Sage Kasyapa and mother Aditi became filled with great bliss on seeing the beautiful form of Vamana and felt great affection for their child. All the birth samskaras (purificatory

rituals) were performed as per the directions of the scriptures. At the sacred thread ceremony of Vamanadeva, the sun-god himself instructed Him in the Gayatri mantra, Brhaspati presented Him with the sacred thread, Kasyapa gave Him a straw belt, mother earth gave Him a deerskin to sit on, the moon-god, who is the king of the forests, gave Him a brahma- danda (the rod of brahmacari). Mother Aditi gave him cloth for underwear, the deity presiding over heaven offered Him an umbrella, Lord Brahma gave Him a water-pot, the seven sages offered Him kusa grass, Sarasvati gave him a string of Rudraksa beads, Kuvera gave Him a pot for begging alms, and mother Bhagavati, the mother of the universe, gave Him alms.

Bali Maharaja had started the performance of a yajna (sacrifice) in the field known as Bhrgukaccha on the bank of the Narmada River. He was famous as a greatly charitable person. Brahmanas who were desirous of his charity were going to the place where the sacrificial ceremony was being held. After the sacred thread ceremony, a new brahmana will beg alms, according to the custom. After His sacred thread ceremony, Vamanadeva, holding His danda (rod), waterpot and umbrella, was going to the sacrificial field of Bali Maharaja for begging. Vamanadeva was walking while holding the umbrella. Being a dwarf, he was covered by the umbrella. When the brahmanas saw him from a distance, they thought that the umbrella was walking by itself, so they were very astonished. Later they understood that a brahmana boy of small size was underneath the umbrella. The brahmanas tried very hard to overtake him, but they were not able to do so. Vamanadeva bewildered all of those brahmanas with His maya and reached the arena of the sacrifice first. The auspicious arrival of Vamanadeva and His brilliant effulgent form diminished the brilliance of the fire of the sacrifice. Thinking Him to be a great personality, Bali Maharaja, his priests and others present there, got up from their seats and welcomed the Lord properly by offering obeisances. Considering Him a great brahmana, Bali Maharaja offered Him obeisances and then placed the water which had washed the Lord's lotus feet on his head. Thus worshipping Him with proper customs, Bali Maharaja spoke to Lord Vamanadeva as follows, "You must have come here to ask me for something. Therefore, whatever You desire, wealth or kingdom, I shall give to You. If you have a desire to marry, I shall give you a qualified girl as per your choice."

The dwarf Vamanadeva replied, "I know the previous members of your very exalted dynasty. You have taken birth in the dynasty of the uncommon warriors Hiranyaksa and Hiranyakasipu. Your grandfather Prahlada was a maha-bhagavata. Just remembering him can purify the jiva (living entity). Your father Virocana, after promising charity to a brahmana, never failed to fulfill his promise. I know that you will also not refuse to fulfill your promise. I ask for three steps of land." Bali Maharaja on hearing this, smilingly said, "You have narrated those great deeds of my ancestors, which even I had no knowledge of. But You have begged for a very insignificant thing. I can see that You are a little brahmana; Your intelligence must also be little. What purpose can be served by three paces of land, measured by your small steps?

"Do you know who I am? I am the owner of the three worlds. I am able to give you the entire Jambudvipa as my wish. After accepting alms from me,

if you still beg alms anywhere else, it will disgrace my name as a great charitable person. Therefore I request you to please reconsider on this matter."

Lord Sri Vamandeva said, "I know that you are the owner of the three worlds and that you can give me many things. But I am a brahmana. A brahmana should be satisfied with little. If brahmanas desire more sense gratification, they lose their spiritual potency. One's desire for sense gratification never ends. If you give me Jambudvipa, I will desire the whole earth. Next My desire will be for Rasatala, then heaven, and finally the position of Brahma. There is no end to this. Material things are of no use to the soul. As a charity given by you, I shall be satisfied with three paces of land as measured by my steps."

At that time, Sukracarya, the spiritual master of the demons, was also nearby. He understood that Lord Vishnu had appeared in the form of a dwarf brahmana to fulfill the motive of the demigods. On the pretext of begging three steps of land, He would take the three worlds from his disciple Bali, leaving him bereft of his kingdom. Foolishly, Bali Maharaja, not knowing the real identity of this little dwarf brahmana, was inclined to fulfill His request.

Sukracarya, seeking the welfare of his disciple, spoke to Bali Maharaja, "Bali! You do not know the real identity of this dwarf brahmana who has come to you. He is the Supreme Lord Himself. To fulfill the motive of the demigods, He has come to you as a petitioner. On the pretext of asking for three steps of land, He will take over all the three worlds from you. Where will you live then? What will you do? With no wealth, how will you perform your charitable religious tasks? Therefore it is my instruction to you that you should not give Him the land." Hearing these words from his guru, Bali Maharaja said, "I have given my word to this brahmana. How can I break my promise? How can I tell a lie? If this dwarf brahmana is the Supreme Lord Himself, then where can I find a better or more qualified candidate for charity? If I refuse to give, He will take by force. Being my guru, why are you creating such obstacles? On the other hand if He is only a dwarf brahmana, how much land can He take by the measure of His three steps? Whatever decision I have made for charity, I cannot abandon it now."

Sukracarya again tried to convince Bali by saying, "Look Bali, in some

special circumstances, one should also tell falsehoods for the protection of dharma and wealth; for example, how much wealth one has. By not keeping this secret, wealth does not remain safe. If wealth is not safe, dharma is not preserved. As soon as you pronounce the words for your promise of charity, this dwarf brahmana will assume a very large Trivikrama form. He will occupy the sky with His body and the three worlds by His two steps. Then you will not be able to keep your word. Therefore, you should never give Him the three steps of land. This, again, is my instruction." Even after his instruction, seeing Bali Maharaja not going back on his promise, Sukracarya, filled with anger, cursed him to lose his opulence.

Bali Maharaja did not fall back from his promise even after his guru's curse. He began to take water from the pot with the intention of offering charity, but while taking water from the water-pot, he saw that the spout was blocked and water was not coming out of the pot. (The reason was that Sukracarya was not able to tolerate the foolishness of his disciple and out of affection, he entered into the waterpot. That prevented the water from flowing out). Bali Maharaja then began to clear the blocked spout with the help of a stick from a broom which destroyed one eye of Sukracarya. It is said that because of his obstructing the service of the Supreme Lord, he became "Kana Sukra" (blind in one eye). However this incident has not been mentioned in the Srimad Bhagavatam.

As Bali Maharaja spoke the words of his promise with water from the water-pot, the dwarf brahmana expanded to a very large Trivikrama form, and He occupied the sky with His body and the three worlds by His two steps. The inconceivably potent Supreme Lord's lotus feet encroached upon the three worlds and reached Satyaloka. Seeing the Lord's lotus feet, Brahma and other demigods became very much pleased. They worshiped those lotus feet with proper customs. Lord Vamanadeva asked Bali Maharaja for one more pace of land.
Lord Vamana said, "After giving your word, not keeping your promise will be an act of irreligion for you."

Bali Maharaja replied, "Everything of mine is gone. I am not sad about that. But I am not able to fulfill my promise. Therefore I am sad and in mental agony. You have acquired everything of mine in Your two steps. There is nothing else of mine remaining." On seeing everything acquired by Lord Vamanadeva, the demons were determined to recapture their lost kingdom. When the demons arrived to kill Vamanadeva, a wonderful Narayani army

emanated from the body of Visnu and began to fight with the demons. Seeing the killing of the demons by the Narayani forces, Bali Maharaja asked them to stop the fight. He said, "Our time is bad so the result of the fight will also be bad." The bird king Garuda, understanding the desire of Lord Visnu, bound Bali Maharaja with the ropes of Varuna.
Seeing Bali Maharaja bound with ropes caused great disturbance everywhere, in heaven and on earth. Then Vamanadeva approached Bali Maharaja and said, "In your dynasty, nobody has broken his word after giving it to a brahmana. You took the oath that you would give Me land measured by three steps. Why are you not giving Me one more step of land? You are religious, yet you are behaving irreligiously."

Bali Maharaja's wife Vindhyavali was a pious lady. She said to her husband, "Whatever material possessions you had, you have given to Vamanadeva, but you have not given your very self." Bali Maharaja was greatly delighted on hearing the timely and devotionally inclined words of his devotional counterpart. He directed Vamanadeva towards his head as a place for the one step of land. At that time, a small foot emanated from the lotus navel of Vamanadeva and rested on the head of Bali Maharaja. Bali Maharaja achieved those lotus feet which are rare even for Brahma and other demigods. On witnessing the great fortune of Bali Maharaja, kettle-drums sounded in heaven and flowers showered down. Lord Vamanadeva, being greatly pleased, spoke to Bali Maharaja, "I am very pleased with you.
You have not fallen from your dharma. Your gurudeva cursed you, yet you did not deviate from the truth. Till now you were the giver and I was the receiver. Now I am the giver and you are the receiver. Whatever you want, I shall give to you." Bali Maharaja having completely surrendered to the Lord, did not ask Him for his lost wealth like a materialistic person. He prayed, "O Lord Vamanadeva! Your soothing lotus feet, which you have placed on my head, may they always remain there."

Service of the Lord, self-surrender to the lotus feet of the Lord, never results in loss for anybody. Due to foolishness, the living entity prays for insignificant things from the Supreme Lord. If one is sincere, one can achieve the completely blissful Supreme Lord by desireless devotion. Bali Maharaja achieved the Supreme Lord by the atma-nivedana (self- surrender) process of bhakti.

Prahlada Maharaja, on seeing the devotion and great fortune of his grandson, felt himself very happy and glorified. He had tried very hard to make his son Virocana a devotee. But Virocana's not being a devotee and having demoniac tendencies had caused pain in his heart. There was now no limit to his joy on seeing his grandson as a devotee. Being pleased with Bali Maharaja, Vamanadeva awarded him the Sutala planet, which is supremely blissful like Vaikuntha, and He ordered the Sudarsana cakra to protect that abode of bhakti from all disturbances.

Lord Vamanadeva, the protector of the dharma of the brahmanas, saw the head of the Bhrgu lineage brahmanas and the the guru of the demons, Sukracarya, standing hesitantly nearby. He said to Sukracarya, "Your disciple, Bali Maharaja, has faced many problems. So perform the yajna again for his welfare." Sukracarya replied, "My disciple has seen You; he has chanted Your name and glories. Your rare lotus feet have been placed on his head. Is my disciple still not pure, that I have to perform a yajna to bless him?"

mantratas tantratas chidram desa-kalarha-vastutah
sarvam karoti nischidram anusankirtanam tava (Srimad
Bhagavatam 8.23.16)

"There may be discrepancies in pronouncing the mantras and observing the regulative principles, and, moreover, there may be discrepancies in regard to time, place, person and paraphernalia. But when Your Lordship's holy name is chanted, everything becomes faultless."

In the Vamana Purana written by Sri Vedavyasa Muni, the pastimes of Vamanadeva have been described in the context of the discussion between Lomaharsana Suta and the other sages. Even after the death of Hiranyakasipu, the demons were in constant control. The demigods were driven away from all the places and the demon kingdom spread in the three worlds. The demons started doing many rituals and sacrifices. Two demons by the name of Maya and Sambara became very famous. Everywhere, religious duties were performed without difficultly. Four legged dharma was sitting; however, one-legged adharma entered nominally. At that time, Bali was enthroned as the king of the demons. Everybody was satisfied by this. Because of his defeating Devaraja Indra, Laksmi Devi became pleased and entered into the body of Bali Maharaja. On Laksmi's entry there, all goddesses became pleased with Bali Maharaja; Bali Maharaja became full of all qualities and achieved immense wealth. Having no place for the demigods, Devaraja Indra went to mother Aditi on the top of the mountain Sumeru and told her about his defeat at the hands of

the demons. "Only the thousand-headed Narayana can rescue the demigods from this difficulty." Understanding this, mother Aditi sent Devaraja Indra along with the demigods to her husband Kasyapa Rsi. As per their mother's instruction, all the demigods went to the third prajapati Kasyapa Rsi and offered him their obeisances. Sage Kasyapa heard their problem and sent them to Brahma in Brahmaloka. Understanding their desire, Brahma also asked them to pray to the creator of the universe, the Supreme Lord, on the northern bank of the ocean of milk. He told them, "During your worship of the Supreme Lord, you will hear the infallible words of the Supreme Lord that He will accept the prayers of Kasyapa Rsi and mother Aditi, and fulfill their desire by appearing as their son."

Ordered by Lord Brahma, and after crossing oceans, mountains, forests and rivers, etc, with great hardship, the demigods reached Kasyapa Rsi and along with him, reached the place known as Amrta. Kasyapa Rsi engaged in a vow which continued for thousands of years.
The demigods also followed the tapoyoga. Sage Kasyapa recited the vedic paramstava (Supreme Prayer) for the pleasure of Narayana and mother Aditi desired for a son.
Thereafter, Kasyapa Rsi along with his wife, went to his asrama in the forest of Kuruksetra. Mother Aditi performed severe penances at that place for ten thousand years. Being satisfied by the prayers of Aditi, the Supreme Lord Vasudeva appeared before her. Lord Vasudeva told mother Aditi to ask for a boon. Aditi prayed that her son Indra would regain the kingdom of heaven. The Supreme Lord said, "So be it!" and assured her by saying that He would fulfill her desire by appearing as her son. Thereafter, on Aditi's becoming pregnant, Sri Krishna appeared in the womb of Aditi. Just by the entrance of Madhusudana into the womb of Aditi, the stength of the demons diminished. Bali Maharaja became powerless as if burnt by fire or cursed by a brahmana. He inquired about the reason for this from his grandfather Prahlada. Prahlada Maharaja, after thinking for a while, said to Bali Maharaja, "Do not consider this incident to be simple. We have to think about counteracting it now." After meditating for some time, Prahlada Maharaja realized that the Lord in the form of Vamana had appeared in the womb of Aditi. He had abducted the splendour of the demons. Bali Maharaja, on hearing the reason for losing his splendour from his grandfather, further inquired, "Who is Sri Hari? How can you say He is the cause of our fear? We have hundreds of mighty and powerful daityas. Vasudeva Krishna does not have power to compare to any one of these." Prahlada Maharaja, the best of the daityas, became angry on hearing such

blasphemous words against Visnu from his grandson and cursed him that the demons would soon be destroyed. "I do not consider anybody other than Sri Krishna as the protector of this material world. May I see you in the position of losing your kingdom after some time."

Bali Maharaja, on hearing unpleasant words from his grandfather, was filled with remorse and repeatedly begged forgiveness for his thoughtless words. Satisfied on seeing his grandson falling down at his lotus feet, Prahlada Maharaja said, "Son! I cursed you angrily. My curse will not go in vain. However, you should not be sad about that. May you be devoted to Acyuta; He will be your rescuer."

After ten months, Lord Govinda was born in the form of a vamana (dwarf). Everywhere auspiciousness and happiness developed in the heart of all living beings. With the advent of Vamanadeva, Lord Brahma completed His jata-karma (birth rituals) and other samskaras, and offered many beautiful prayers to Lord Vamanadeva. Vamanadeva, satisfied by the prayers, said that the promise that He had first made to Indra and then to Aditi, He was now repeating to Lord Brahma as well: He would see to it that Indra would achieve the ruling power of the universe.

At the sacred thread ceremony of Vamanadeva, Brahma gave Him a Krishnajin (black skin), Brhaspati gave Him the sacred thread, Marici gave Him a palasa danda (the rod of a brahmacari), Vasistha gave Him a water-pot, Angira gave him a kusacira, Pulaha gave Him a sitting mat, and Pulastya gave Him two cloths of yellow colour. Vamanadeva, after being worshipped by the demigods, and holding the rod, waterpot and umbrella, began to walk to the sacrificial field of Bali Maharaja. As Vamanadeva was walking, the earth became free of miseries and became restless. The great serpent, Ananta, came out from Rasatala and began to help Vamanadeva. On seeing Lord Vamanadeva, the fear of snakes goes away. Seeing the earth over-excited, Bali Maharaja inquired about the reason from Sukracarya. Sukracarya then said, "The cause of the universe, the eternal Sri Hari has appeared in the home of Kasyapa in the form of Vamana. He will come to your yajna. The earth is becoming restless by the deflection of His feet." Hearing this from Sukracarya, Bali Maharaja considered himself very fortunate as he would be able to have a glimpse of the Supreme Lord Vamanadeva. "The Supreme Lord's auspicious arrival is occuring; what is my duty now?" Bali Maharaja asked Sukracarya.

Sukracharya replied, "O king of the demons! According to Vedic instructions, only the demigods are enjoyers of the offerings of yajna, but you have made the demons enjoyers of the offerings of yajna. Lord Sri Hari, although satisfied as the maintainer, is coming for the fulfillment of the desire of the demigods. Therefore, to whatever He will desire from you for the welfare of the demigods, you should clearly tell Him that you will not be able to give to Him."

In reply Bali Maharaja said, "O brahmana, how can I say this? If some ordinary person asks me for something, I am not able to say no to him. If in place of that, Govinda Himself were to come to me as a beggar, how would I be able to refuse Him? I can give up my life but I can not refuse Him. I have heard about the glories of charity from you. You are now expressing a different opinion. You should not obstruct me in the matter of charity." At that time, Vamanadeva appeared in the sacrificial arena of Bali Maharaja along with Brhaspati and other demigods. Then Bali spoke to his priest Sukracarya, "Lord Sri Hari Himself has come to our home, so He should ask for whatever He wishes."

With the entry of Vamanadeva in the sacrificial arena, all the demons became lusterless by His splendor. However, Vasistha, Visvamitra, Garga Rsi and other top-most sages became greatly obliged on seeing Vamanadeva. Vamanadeva praised the yajna of Bali Maharaja, its organizers and priests. They also expressed their gratitude to Vamanadeva.

With great devotion, Bali Mahraja worshiped Lord Govinda with water for cleaning His feet and offering oblations, and spoke, "O best of men, please ask for whatever You wish, be it gold, jewels, elephants, buffaloes, cloth, ornaments, wives, cows, copper, silver and all other metals, or the whole earth."

Although smiling, Vamandeva spoke with a serious expression, "O king, to save my fire all I ask from you are three steps of land. Please give gold or villages to whoever asks for them."

Bali Maharaja said, "Your purpose would not be served by three steps of land. Please ask for land measured by thousands of steps." Even then, Vamandeva asked only for three steps of land. Bali Maharaja then took water in his hand and made the promise to give land measured by three steps to Vamanadeva. Immediately Vamanadeva manifested a gigantic

form which was greatly splendid and the cause of all. All the mighty demons, on seeing this very bright form of Visnu achieved that state which insects would assume on seeing fire.
The all-powerful Visnu then covered the sky and the three worlds in a very short time. Defeating the demons, He awarded the kingdom of heaven to Indra. Thereafter, Lord Visnu gave the Patala region, which is below the earth, to Maharaja Bali. Sarvesvara Visnu also told Bali, "After the passing of Vaivasvata Manu and on the arrival of the Savarni manvantara, you will become Indra. Now I have given the region controlled by you to Indra. Whatever happens, as per my order, you should stay in the Patala region of Sutala-puri, which is full of many qualities and charming with many beauties, and enjoy the srika- sandalwood and many other types of sense pleasures."

Bali Maharaja replied, "O Lord, by receiving these items of enjoyment from You, may I not forget you. Please bless me that I can remember you." In this way Sri Hari gave the kingdom of the three worlds to Indra and blessings to Bali Maharaja and disappeared.

By hearing this story of Bali and Vamanadeva's pastime, people who have lost their kingdoms will get them back. People who are in separation of their goal will be obliged by achieving them. Brahmanas will aquire knowledge of the absolute truth. Ksatriyas will become expert in conquering the earth. Vaisyas will achieve an increase in wealth. Sudras will get happiness and fortune; and all those who hear this will become free from all sins.

Almost at the end of the Vamana Purana, there is a short description of the binding of Bali and of Bali Maharaja's wife Vindhyavali and son Banasura.

chalayasi vikramane balim adbhuta-

vamana pada-nakha-nira-janita-

jana-pavana

kesava dhrta-vamana-rupa jaya jagadisa hare

(Dasavatara stotra of Jayadeva)

"O Kesava! To trick the great demon Bali Maharaja by Your steps and to purify all living entities by the water that touched the nails of Your lotus

feet, You assumed the form of Vamana. All glories to the Lord of the universe."

Vamsi das Babaji: "You Must Weep for Krishna!"

The following is an excerpt from the chapter "What is Bhakti?" in the book "A Taste of Transcendence" by Srila Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Maharaj.

The great Vaisnava saint, Vamsi dasa Babaji Maharaja, was no ordinary sadhu. Outwardly, he had his advent in what is now known as Bangladesh, in Majidpur Village, Maimansingh district, near Jamalpur. But later, he came to Navadvipa-dhama, accepted the babaji order and performed his bhajana under a tree. The order of sannyasa is given for preaching, but a babaji will perform bhajana in a holy, secluded place. A babaji will not go outside for pracara (preaching). Many people would come to Babaji Maharaja and offer to build him a cottage, but he chose to remain always beneath a banyan tree. He would not move from there. He was surcharged with krsna-prema. He was a very tall figure. He never shaved, but remained like a madman. Many people would offer him various things, but he would pay them no attention. Whatever he might receive, he would distribute to others. He was an anchorite. Nobody could understand his behavior. He had only two big cloth bags---he had no temple. In one cloth bag was Gaura-Nitai and, in the other, Radha-Krsna. Sometimes, he would take the Deities out and perform puja. So, is his bhakti less because he had just small Deities, and ours greater because we have a big temple? Gaura-Nityananda were most satisfied by his service. Our Parampujyapada Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura used to bow down to him from a distance. He prohibited his disciples from visiting Babaji Maharaja. His disciples asked, "Shall we not have darsana of the sadhus?" But Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura replied, "You will not be able to

understand his behavior and you will commit offenses. He is not within this world, but is moving in the transcendental realm. If I commit an offense, it will be anti-devotional. For this reason, I am bowing down to him from a distance. Only a suddha bhakta can understand his wonderful behavior. An ordinary novice of bhajana will be unable to understand, so he should not go there. Babaji Maharaja is always surcharged with krsna-prema!"

There was a person from Navadvipa-dhama who used to come to Babaji Maharaja. One day, he thought, "I have the desire to obtain the Supreme Lord. How can I get Bhagavan?" He was only murmuring, speaking to himself, so Babaji Maharaja did not reply. This person came back repeatedly to see Babaji Maharaja. Finally, one day, he approached Maharaja directly.

"What do you want?" Babaji Maharaja

asked him. "I want to see Bhagavan," the

man said.

Babaji Maharaja replied with only one word: "Weep!"

We might supply so much scriptural evidence to try to explain, in so many ways, how to obtain the Supreme Lord, but what did Vamsi dasa Babaji Maharaja say? "Weep for Him!" If you can weep for Him, then you can get Him. If there is want for Him, then He will come. We are uttering His Names, but we do not want Him. So, we are uttering the Names of Krsna---"hare krsna, hare krsna, krsna krsna, hare hare, krsna rama, hare rama, rama rama, hare hare"---and Krsna appears before us. He says to us, "Come along!"

We say to Him, "No, I cannot go now. Right now I require a million dollars to save my business. I have my children. I have just bought a building. I cannot go now."

"So, why have you called Me?" Krsna asks.

"I have called you to give me a million dollars," we reply. "Remove my difficulties. I do not have time to go now."

From where are we uttering the Name? Not from the heart! We are chanting, "hare krsna" but, if Krsna were to come, we would be unable to go.

A certain Svamiji gave an illustration. It is an illustration involving the ordinary day-to-day life of a householder but, nonetheless, there is something

very impressive about this illustration. In a town in Bengal, there was a man who worked in an office. He lived with his wife and two children. One of the children was only three or four months old and the other was seven years old. One day, the man told his wife, "You will have to prepare breakfast early today because I have to go into the office early. After I eat, I shall leave right away." When the wife went to cook, she first put the baby on the bed and then went into the kitchen. But, whenever she would enter the kitchen, the child would cry. She thought, "With the child in my lap, how will I be able to cook? It is very difficult." She was thinking what she should do. Then she thought of a way she could manage. She called the seven-year-old child.

"Darling, come here!" she called. "Do you know that red toy

in the shop?" "Yes, I know it," the child answered.
"Go and buy that toy, but be sure that it makes a nice jingling sound."

The child took some money and went off to buy the toy. He brought it home and gave it to the mother. The mother laid the baby down on the bed and hung the red-colored toy with the jingling sound above him, at the end of a rope. The baby saw the toy and immediately started to play with it, hitting it from side to side. The child was most delighted as he continued to slap the toy and hear the jingling sound. For one hour he played like that, and the mother went to do her cooking. After that, the child started to feel hungry. For the entire time that the child was playing, he did not remember his mother. But, now that he felt hungry, he thought, "Oh, where is my mother?" But his mother did not come. Then, he started crying, signifying, "I am hungry! Come!" He could not speak, so he beckoned his mother by crying. "Come to me and suckle me! I am hungry!" His mother, however, was busy cooking. "No," she thought, "let the child cry."

After some time, the child stopped crying and went back to playing with the toy---jingle, jingle, jingle. After playing like that for a while, the pangs of hunger returned. His hunger increased and increased and he became more and more unhappy. He began to cry for his mother even more loudly than before.

His mother heard the crying of the baby, but thought that she should first finish her cooking.

Finally, the hunger became unbearable for the child. The child thought, "I don't want toys!" All he could think about was his mother.

His crying became louder and louder until he was screaming. He started to

throw his arms about and kick his legs, in a tantrum.

Then the mother thought, "Oh, I cannot stay away any longer!" The mother ran toward the child, embraced him and suckled him.

Like this, the Supreme Lord has given us toys---the toy of a wife or husband, toys of children, toys of buildings, toys of radios, toys of videos, toys of computers. Seeing this, Krsna thinks, "They are absorbed in their toys! I have no worries. I am engaged in My pastimes in the transcendental realm. They do not want this. They want those things instead. Here, take this computer! Take that video! Take this! Take that!"

Upon the awakening of his real self (atma), a man feels the want of the sweetest affection of the Supreme Lord. He cries, "Oh Supreme Lord! In this world, nothing gives me happiness. Everything is temporary. Everyone is selfish. You are my most beloved! Where are You? I have forgotten You! Come! Come! I am in a furnace! Come! Come!" Weeping, he calls, but

Krsna does not come. "I am engaged in My pastimes," Krsna says. For some time, the man then becomes absorbed in the affairs of his family and relatives, and forgets Krsna. Time passes and he cries again, "Where is My beloved Supreme Lord? Where is He?" Crying, crying. But, the Supreme Lord still does not come. Ultimately, he shouts, "I do not want a house! I do not want anything! Nobody is mine---You are mine! Oh beloved Supreme Lord! Come! Come! Come!" He cries and weeps, tossing his arms and legs about. Then Krsna cries, "Oh!" and comes to him. This sort of perturbation of the heart, extreme eagerness for getting Bhagavan, must be there.

Vamsi dasa Babaji Maharaja said only one word: "Weep!" But that single word has great significance. When we associate with the suddha bhakta who is crying for Krsna, then the eternal nature of atma will be awakened. You have love for God. Love is there in your soul. It exists, but it is presently enveloped by the external potency of the Supreme Lord and you have become averse to Sri Krsna. Pa sing through different species, our minds have become enveloped by so many evil desires...

Vyas-Purnima & Guru-Tattva

Compiled by His Divine Grace Sree Sreemad Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha Goswami Maharaj

TATTVA - 'Tat' = Transcendental Reality which cannot be comprehended by material senses - gross or subtle

'Tattva' = Inner significance of Transcendental Reality

Introduction

Etymological significance of the word 'Guru' has been elaborately described in different Indian scriptures. It will not be wise to make the subject terse and beyond the point, by going through theoretical scholarly discussion, frustrating the real purpose of getting spiritual amelioration - practical realisation of the Highest Bliss. We are therefore going to delineate fundamental points relevant for the devotional practice for getting the highest objective- Transcendental Divine Knowledge descending through preceptorial or disciplic channel as taught by realised souls - bonafide Gurus - pure devotees with evidences from authentic scriptures.

Common Meaning

Guru: Spiritual Master (acharya), preceptor, professor or lecturer, advisor, teacher, instructor, initiator.

Spiritual Interpretations

alpam va vahuva yasya
shrutasyo pakaroti yah,
tamapeeha gurum
vidyachchhrutopakriyaya taya
(Manu 2/149)

As per scriptural prescript, one who imparts a bit or sufficient knowledge of the Vedas to a deserving aspirant for his eternal benefit is termed 'Guru'.

gukarashchandhakarah syat
rukaratannirodhakah,
andhakara nirodhitvat
gururityabhi dheeyate.
(Visvasar-tantra)

'Gu' syllable of the word Guru denotes darkness (nescience) and the 'Ru' denotes removal of darkness (nescience). One who removes darkness - ignorance - is called Guru.

gukarashchandhakarah syat
rukarasteja uchyate,
ajnana nashakam brahma
gurureva na samshayah
(Visvasar-tantra)

'Gu' syllable signifies darkness-ignorance and 'Ru' signifies light. Therefore, it is undoubtedly true that self-effulgent Para-brahma, whose light removes darkness-ignorance, is Guru.

ajnanatimirandhasya jnananjanashalakaya
chakshurunmeelitam yena tasmai shri gurave namah
-(Gaudiya Kanthahar)

My prostrated obeisances to Sree Gurudeva who opens my blind eyes removing dark nescience with the help of eyeslave-stem of Divine Knowledge.

sakshad-dharitvena samasta-sastrair-
uktas tatha bhavyata eva sadbhih
kintu prabhor yah priya eva tasya
vande guroh sricharanaravindam
(Vishvanath Chakravarty)

The Spiritual Master is to be honoured as much as the Supreme Lord because He is the Most Confident Servitor of the Lord. This is acknowledged in all scriptures and followed by all authorities. I offer my respectful obeisances unto

the Lotus Feet of such a Spiritual Master, who is a bonafide representative of Sree Hari (Supreme Lord).

[Spiritual Master (Gurudeva) is one with Supreme Lord Sree Hari in the sense that He is His dearest. Gurudeva is not enjoyer Bhagavan, but He is the Most Confidential Servitor. As such Tulasi leaf is offered on the Lotus Feet of Sree Hari, but not on the Lotus Feet of Gurudeva. It is offered on the upper portion of His Spiritual - His hands.]

yasya prasada_ bhagava_ prasado
yasyaprasadannagat h kutopi
dhyayamstuvamstasya yashastrisandhya
vande guroh sri charanaravindam
-(Vishvanath Chakravarty)

By whose grace I can get the grace of Sree Hari and without whose grace and compassion I have got no shelter, to the Lotus Feet of such a Spiritual Master, do I offer my respectful obeisances by meditating and singing in adoration His glories in the morning, at midday and in the evening.

sri gurucharanapadma kevalabhakatisadma
bando mui savadhana mate
jaharo prasade bhai a bhava tariya jai
ckrishna prapti hoi jaha hoite
gurumukha padmavakhya chittete kariya aikya
ar na kariha mane asha
sri gurucharane rati ei se uttama gat...
je prasade pure sarva asha
chakhu dano dila jei janme janme prabhu sei
divya jnan hride prokashita
premabhaktR30; jaha haite avidya vinasha jate
vede gaya jahara charita
-(Srila Narottam Thakur)

The Lotus feet of His Divine Grace Sree Gurudeva is the abode of exclusive devotion. I chant the glories of Sree Gurudeva in devout adoration. By His unfathomable grace, I will cross the ocean of births and deaths as well as get

Sree Krishna. I should be satisfied by reconciling the nectarous sayings emanating from the Lotus lips of Gurudeva with the thoughts of my mind, nothing more can I expect to get. Devotion to the Lotus Feet of Sree Gurudeva is the highest objective. All desires are fulfilled by His grace. By whose grace I have got spiritual eyes to see God, by whose grace Divine Transcendental Knowledge is revealed in me, by whose grace I have got Prema-bhakti, by whose grace my ignorance is removed, may such Gurudeva become my eternal Divine Master in every birth. The Vedas sing the Transcendental pastimes of Gurudeva. There is a hearsay that one community in India does not acknowledge the necessity of Guru (as a Spiritual Guide). According to them God is the only Guru and all others are god brothers. The eldest godbrother is called Dada guru [Dada means elder brother]. This sort of conclusion is neither rational nor supported by scriptures. We find in this world that all of us accept authorities or experts in all matters. When we are acknowledging Guru in every sphere of life, it is absurd to say that we do not require the help of Guru to know God, Who is beyond human comprehension. Those who say like this, are really not serious to know God. The indispensability of accepting Guru for God-realisation is substantiated by scriptural evidence.

Acharyavan purusho veda
(Chhandogya Upanishad)

Only the person initiated by Guru can know Para-Brahma (God).

uttisthata jagrata
prapya varan nivodhata
kshurasya dhara nishita duratya ya
durgam pathastat kavayo vadanti
-(Kathopanishad)

Veda (Divinity Himself) is giving beneficial instruction to the sadhus - 'O sadhus! Rise up (withdraw your material senses from the material objects completely), awake (be reinstated in your own real self), sincerely endeavour to know God, praying the grace of great saints. This world is sharp like a razor -full of miseries- and as such it is very difficult to get delivered from it. Without worshipping Divinity, it is impossible to cross the ocean of births and deaths. The realised saints say that without careful zealous efforts nobody can get God-

realisation, the panacea for the malady of worldly afflictions, i.e., nobody can cross the ocean of births and deaths without worship of God and without taking absolute shelter of the Lotus Feet of Gurudeva.

Even Supreme Lord Sree Krishna, Sree Gaurhari and Lord Ramchandra played the pastimes of accepting Guru to teach the indispensability of accepting Guru. Sree Krishna, Sree Gaurhari and Sree Ramachandra accepted Sandipani Muni, Sree Ishwarapuripada and Sree Vashishtha Muni respectively as Spiritual Guides.

Weep for Krishna

The great Vaisnava saint, Vamsi dasa Babaji Maharaja, was no ordinary sadhu. Outwardly, he had his advent in what is now known as Bangladesh, in Majidpur Village, Maimansingh district, near Jamalpur. But later, he came to Navadvipa-dhama, accepted the babaji order and performed his bhajana under a tree. The order of sannyasa is given for preaching, but a babaji will perform bhajana in a holy, secluded place. A babaji will not go outside for pracara (preaching). Many people would come to Babaji Maharaja and offer to build him a cottage, but he chose to remain always beneath a banyan tree. He would not move from there. He was surcharged with krsna-prema. He was a very tall figure. He never shaved, but remained like a madman. Many people would offer him various things, but he would pay them no attention. Whatever he might receive, he would distribute to others. He was an anchorite. Nobody could understand his behavior. He had only two big cloth bags---he had no temple. In one cloth bag was Gaura-Nitai and, in the other, Radha-Krsna. Sometimes, he would take the Deities out and perform puja. So, is his bhakti less because he had just small Deities, and ours greater because we have a big temple? Gaura-Nityananda were most satisfied by his service. Our Parampujyapada Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura used to bow down to him from a distance. He prohibited his disciples from visiting Babaji Maharaja. His disciples asked, "Shall we not have darsana

of the sadhus?" But Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura replied, "You will not be able to understand his behavior and you will commit offenses. He is not within this world, but is moving in the transcendental realm. If I commit an offense, it will be anti-devotional. For this reason, I am bowing down to him from a distance. Only a suddha bhakta can understand his wonderful behavior. An ordinary novice of bhajana will be unable to understand, so he should not go there. Babaji Maharaja is always surcharged with krsna-prema!"

There was a person from Navadvipa-dhama who used to come to Babaji Maharaja. One day, he thought, "I have the desire to obtain the Supreme Lord. How can I get Bhagavan?" He was only murmuring, speaking to himself, so Babaji Maharaja did not reply. This person came back repeatedly to see Babaji Maharaja. Finally, one day, he approached Maharaja directly.

"What do you want?" Babaji Maharaja asked him.

"I want to see Bhagavan," the man said.

Babaji Maharaja replied with only one word: "Weep!"

We might supply so much scriptural evidence to try to explain, in so many ways, how to obtain the Supreme Lord, but what did Vamsi dasa Babaji Maharaja say? "Weep for Him!" If you can weep for Him, then you can get Him. If there is want for Him, then He will come. We are uttering His Names, but we do not want Him. So, we are uttering the Names of Krsna---"hare krsna, hare krsna, krsna krsna, hare hare, krsna rama, hare rama, rama rama, hare hare"---and Krsna appears before us. He says to us, "Come along!"

We say to Him, "No, I cannot go now. Right now I require a million dollars to save my business. I have my children. I have just bought a building. I cannot go now."

"So, why have you called Me?" Krsna asks.

"I have called you to give me a million dollars," we reply. "Remove my difficulties. I do not have time to go now."

From where are we uttering the Name? Not from the heart! We are chanting, "hare krsna" but, if Krsna were to come, we would be unable to go.

A certain Svamiji gave an illustration. It is an illustration involving the ordinary day-to-day life of a householder but, nonetheless, there is something very impressive about this illustration. In a town in Bengal, there was a man who worked in an office. He lived with his wife and two children. One of the children was only three or four months old and the other was seven years old. One day, the man told his wife, "You will have to prepare breakfast early today because I have to go into the office early. After I eat, I shall leave right away." When the wife went to cook, she first put the baby on the bed and then went into the kitchen. But, whenever she would enter the kitchen, the child would cry. She thought, "With the child in my lap, how will I be able to cook? It is very difficult." She was thinking what she should do. Then she thought of a way she could manage. She called the seven-year-old child.

"Darling, come here!" she called. "Do you know that red toy in the shop?"

"Yes, I know it," the child answered.

"Go and buy that toy, but be sure that it makes a nice jingling sound."

The child took some money and went off to buy the toy. He brought it home and gave it to the mother. The mother laid the baby down on the bed and hung the red-colored toy with the jingling sound above him, at the end of a rope. The baby saw the toy and immediately started to play with it, hitting it from side to side. The child was most delighted as he continued to slap the toy and hear the jingling sound. For one hour he played like that, and the mother went to do her cooking. After that, the child started to feel hungry. For the entire time that the child was playing, he did not remember his mother. But, now that he felt hungry, he thought, "Oh, where is my mother?" But his mother did not come. Then, he started crying, signifying, "I am hungry! Come!" He could not speak, so he beckoned his mother by crying. "Come to me and suckle me! I am hungry!" His mother, however, was busy cooking. "No," she thought, "let the child cry."

After some time, the child stopped crying and went back to playing with the toy---jingle, jingle, jingle. After playing like that for a while, the pangs of hunger returned. His hunger increased and increased and he became more and more unhappy. He began to cry for his mother even more loudly than before.

His mother heard the crying of the baby, but thought that she should first finish

her cooking.

Finally, the hunger became unbearable for the child. The child thought, "I don't want toys!" All he could think about was his mother.
His crying became louder and louder until he was screaming. He started to throw his arms about and kick his legs, in a tantrum.

Then the mother thought, "Oh, I cannot stay away any longer!" The mother ran toward the child, embraced him and suckled him.

Like this, the Supreme Lord has given us toys---the toy of a wife or husband, toys of children, toys of buildings, toys of radios, toys of videos, toys of computers. Seeing this, Krsna thinks, "They are absorbed in their toys! I have no worries. I am engaged in My pastimes in the transcendental realm. They do not want this. They want those things instead. Here, take this computer! Take that video! Take this! Take that!"

Upon the awakening of his real self (atma), a man feels the want of the sweetest affection of the Supreme Lord. He cries, "Oh Supreme Lord! In this world, nothing gives me happiness. Everything is temporary. Everyone is selfish. You are my most beloved! Where are You? I have forgotten You! Come! Come! I am in a furnace! Come! Come!" Weeping, he calls, but Krsna does not come. "I am engaged in My pastimes," Krsna says. For some time, the man then becomes absorbed in the affairs of his family and relatives, and forgets Krsna. Time passes and he cries again, "Where is My beloved Supreme Lord? Where is He?" Crying, crying. But, the Supreme Lord still does not come. Ultimately, he shouts, "I do not want a house! I do not want anything! Nobody is mine---You are mine! Oh beloved Supreme Lord! Come! Come! Come!" He cries and weeps, tossing his arms and legs about. Then Krsna cries, "Oh!" and comes to him. This sort of perturbation of the heart, extreme eagerness for getting Bhagavan, must be there.

Vamsi dasa Babaji Maharaja said only one word: "Weep!" But that single word has great significance. When we associate with the suddha bhakta who is crying for Krsna, then the eternal nature of atma will be awakened. You have love for God. Love is there in your soul. It exists, but it is presently enveloped by the external potency of the Supreme Lord and you have become averse to Sri Krsna. Passing through different species, our minds have become enveloped by so many evil desires...

What is Sraddha?

Sangat sanjayate kamah (*Gita* 2.62).

If one associates with a thief, he develops the habits of a thief and becomes a thief himself. Similarly, if one associates with a *sadhu*, one becomes a *sadhu* oneself and is able to distinguish between good and bad. After this, one will try to learn about *sad-vastu*, the Supreme Lord, and in order to achieve the service of the Supreme Lord, one will surrender unto the pure devotee of the Lord.

There are two types of faith:

Laukika-sraddha: customary or worldly faith.

Tattvika-sraddha: ontological faith.

If one goes to the temple, pays obeisance's to the Lord or serves the devotees to satisfy the requirements of customs prevalent in the society, then this is classified as *laukika-sraddha*. *Tattvika-sraddha*, however, is completely different from this.

Sraddha means "firm faith," i.e., to not only believe in God but to have firm faith that the Supreme Lord is the lord of all other controllers or *isvaras*, that He is omnipotent, and that if we serve the Lord, all our familial, societal, political and other duties will be automatically served. If the Lord is satisfied, everybody is satisfied. This type of firm faith in the Lord is known as *sraddha*according to Srila Kaviraja Gosvami.

What is the main criteria: my duties as husband and son or taking advantage of association of devotees?

My dear ***,
Received your letter dated 6th February, 2001 to our Eastern zonal office, Guwahati, Assam and noted the contents.
Just after my return to India from more than one month preaching tour in Europe and Russia, I was fully engaged in observing month-long Damodar Vrata (Kartik Vrata) at Chandigarh Math, western zonal office.
Supreme Lord Sree Krishna has said in the Gita emphatically that a sincere soul will never be deceived. Supreme Lord is residing in the heart of every soul and knows everything. He is omniscient and omnipotent and he regulates the fruits of the actions of conditioned souls. There cannot be any mistake in His giving the fruits. In the Gita it is said, "Karmanye vadhikaraste, ma phaleshu kadacana". We can do actions but we can have no hold over the fruits of the actions. Fruits are regulated by Supreme Lord.
Conditioned souls have got currents of thoughts in their minds imbibed from previous impressions of millions of births - holy thoughts and unholy thoughts. This human birth is given by Lord to fight against unholy thoughts and to enhance holy thoughts. After passing through 80 lacs of births of different species, we have got this human birth. God was satisfied by creating human being as only human beings have the capacity to discriminate between eternal and non-eternal and can worship Supreme Lord who is All-existence, All-knowledge and All-bliss. This human birth is not meant for eating, sleeping, defending and mating like birds and beasts. In Srimad Bhagavat, 9th Canto, Ved Vyasa Muni has said that Ambarish Maharaj, who was most favorite devotee of Supreme Lord Sree Krishna could remove all desires of this world gradually, by performing bhajan without deceitfulness. A conditioned soul cannot get the desired result all of a sudden. If he is sincere in his efforts, by the grace of Supreme Lord Sree Krishna and His devotees, he will be ultimately successful. Actually we reap the fruits of our own actions. It is out of ignorance that we blame others for our own drawbacks. I hope as you are sincere, you will be helped by Supreme Lord and His devotees.
“Sadhan bina sadhya vastu keho nahi paye” - Without devotional practice

nobody can get the objective.
You are to take advantage of Sadhu Sanga as much as practically possible. Also, you are not to blame others for your own circumstances. As per the fruits of our own previous karma we have got such circumstances, but you are not to stop devotion to Supreme Lord Sree Krishna. You are to continually engage your energy to worship Sree Krishna and not for your relatives. As and when you get opportunity for Sadhu Sanga, you take advantage of it. Like when we go to a doctor and get injected, the effect of the injection remains for a long period, similarly when we take injection of sadhu sanga, the effect remains for some time, say, 3-4 months. Many household devotees who are not able to get much sadhu sanga, come for Navadwip Dham Parikrama and the effect of the injection remains for rest of the year and then again…
As I am awfully busy I have written a few lines to you by getting some spare time.
My love to you. May All-Merciful Supreme Lord Sree Krishna and His Absolute Counterpart Gurudeva bless you all.
Affectionately yours,
Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

What is the way to remove all anti-devotional propensities?

Remembering vaishnavas will remove all anti-devotional propensities from the mind. All sorts of anti-devotional ideas are removed just by getting the mercy of vaishnavas.

"guru-vaishnava-bhagavan tini smaranam."

It has been stated by Kaviraj Goswami in Chaitanya Charitamrita that remembrance of guru, vaishnavas and bhagavan can give us so many attainments. It can remove all ulterior motives. There are obstacles to getting pure devotion for Sri Krishna. Only by remembering guru and vaishnavas can

you get rid of those obstacles.

Narottama das Thakur is also saying this in his hymns. Narottama das Thakur is not an ordinary man. He is amongst the personal entourage of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. His words are transcendental words. They act as an incantation. Even if you do not understand them you can follow them. In one of his hymns he is saying- “sri guru vaishnave rati na hailo amar” “I am the most wretched person. Why? Because I have no faith in guru and vaishnavas”. Narottama das Thakur is saying, "How can I get service to my eternal master Sri Krishna, Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and his entourage. How can I get it? I have got no faith."

Krishna, the Supreme Lord, gives His service or bestows His service through the suddha-bhakta, the pure devotee. Without the pure devotee you can never find service to Sri Krishna or the Supreme Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. You cannot see the sun by ignoring the light of the Sun or the rays of the Sun. Can anybody see the Sun, directly? "I do not take help from the rays of the sun. I shall ignore the light. I will go to the sun directly!" It is impossible. The rays of the sun enable you you to see it. Similarly Narottama das Thakur is also saying in his hymns "For one who has no inclination to worship Radha, his worship of Krishna is totally fruitless and futile. He will get nowhere."

Nobody can have any conception of the sun without his attributes heat and light. Nobody can conceive it. Similarly, nobody can have any conception of Sri Krishna without Radha. The complete reality of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna includes the complete counterpart Srimati Radhika, extension of Gopinath. So, if I have no belief, no faith, no devotion and no respect for guru and vaishnavas then how can I get service? I am a wretched person who is most unfortunate. ki rupe paibo seva mui duracar, sri guru vaisnave rati na haila amar. Again, in the next verse or prayer he repeats the same thing. “I have been blocked by the illusory energy of the Supreme Lord. Therefore I have got no tinge of respect for vaishnavas. How can I get eternal welfare?” A hopeless condition.
“ashesh mayate mana magan haila,
vaisnavete lesh matra rati na janmila”.

What should be the behavior of a sadhu?

If sugarcane is cut to pieces, will it say, "Oh! You have given me affliction! I shall give up my sweet nature! I shall become bitter or sour!"? Even if you cut sugarcane to pieces, it will not give up its nature. It will always give a sweet taste. Its nature is to give sweetness. No other tendency is there. If you heat gold, that gold will not give up its radiant glow. "Oh! I have been burnt by fire! I shall give up my beautiful radiance and become black!" No, as much as you heat the gold, by that much, its glow will increase. Similarly, if you oppress the sadhu, his glory will be manifested ever more and more. He is incapable of doing any harm to any living being of the world. You are to understand that a person with such behavior is a sadhu.
A sadhu does not retaliate against the oppression of others. Goodness always emanates from the sadhu. He cannot give any injury to any living being of this world. The tendency towards harm is completely absent from his character, so how can he do harm? He always does good towards others. In the holy biography of Prahlada Maharaja, you will find that he tolerated the oppression imposed upon him by Hiranyakasipu. Haridasa Thakura, during the life of Caitanya Mahaprabhu, also tolerated great oppression--titiksavah.

What Srila Narada Gosvami taught us through Sri Dhruva Maharaj?

Narada Gosvami gave Dhruva some advice, and the mother of Dhruva, Suniti, also advised him thus: "If you have any kind of hostile mentality against your stepmother, then you will not succeed in your worship of the Lord. You will not receive His grace. Your stepmother is not the cause of your miseries. You are the cause. You have brought this upon yourself through some behavior in a previous birth. You are now reaping the fruits of that behavior:
mamangalam tata paresu mamstha

bhunkte jano yat para-duhkhadas tat
(Srimad Bhagavatam, 4.8.17)
"Do not blame others for your afflictions. You do not realize that you are receiving the same afflictions that you once inflicted upon others. God is omniscient. There cannot be any mistake in His judgement. You should tolerate this."
Sadhus think like this. A sadhu does not retaliate against the oppression of others. Goodness always emanates from the sadhu. He cannot give any injury to any living being of this world. The tendency towards harm is completely absent from his character, so how can he do harm? He always does good towards others.

When I first met my Gurudeva-

Now I am going to tell you about my condition when I first took shelter of the lotus feet of Srila Gurudeva, Srila Bhakti Dayita Madhava Maharaj.
I was staying with my brother-in-law who was an officer and I used to go to Calcutta University for study.
At my first meeting with Srila Gurudeva, I told him, "I have had indifference to the world for a long time. I feel that the world is not eternal and that one day, my mother, father, brother, sister, and all others will be gone. All will be over. I become sad by thinking like this and feel like renouncing the world. But I have lust and a desire to enjoy. Therefore I am afraid of the thought of renouncing the world. If I somehow renounce the world but then have to return to it later, friends will make fun of me and people of this world will laugh at me. So now, please tell me, will it be good for me to renounce the material world or not?"

In reply, Srila Gurudeva explained to me with great affection, "All right, you may lack something, but the Supreme Lord does not lack anything. He is infinite and His mercy has no limit."

After that I told Srila Gurudeva, "Seeing my innocence, my father has more affection for me than for my brothers. He has raised me, educated me and has

many expectations of me. I now have a chance to earn money and serve him. Will I not incur sin if I leave him at this time?"

Srila Guru Maharaj then recited this sloka from Bhagavad Gita:

sarva dharman parityajya
mamekam saranam vraja
aham tvam sarvapapebhyo
moksayisyami ma sucah
(BG 18.66)

He explained to me with great affection, "If you come here by giving up all of your responsibilities, Sri Krsna will free you from all sins. You need not worry about it or have any fear. I will further say that it will be a service to your father."
After hearing his advice I felt that Srila Gurudeva liked me. I further inquired, "How should I leave home? If I take my bedding, they will catch me."
Srila Gurudeva replied, "Yes, very good, do not come with your bedding. Bring only your clothes."
I went home, and was leaving with some clothes when my father asked me, "Where are you going with your clothes?" I replied, "I have one friend. We will be benefited by meeting him; that is why I am going to meet him." My father thought that I had a friend who I would get some material benefit from. He did not know that only the sadhu is the true friend. So he happily gave me his permission to leave. In this way, I came by running away from home.
After I had joined the Math, I saw that sannyasis perform Guru puja on the appearance day of their gurudeva. Therefore our gurudeva also performed worship of Srila Prabhupada on his appearance day. On utthana ekadasi also, Srila Gurudeva used to worship Srila Prabhupada, and then we would perform worship of Srila Gurudeva . Srila Gurudeva was a personal associate of the Supreme Lord. Prabhupada also was not an ordinary human being. He shook the whole world. Our Gurudeva was serving the Supreme Lord 24 hours a day. He had a most ideal character. He even chastened a rascal like me.

Who Can Speak Hari Katha

Out of affection, many other devotees were giving pressure to speak less, so that no unwanted incident may occur. Some of the well-wishing devotees even advised me to especially pray for the grace of my Most Revered Gurudeva on the occasion of His centennial function from 2003 till 2005. Who is capable of imparting power to engage in the highest form of bhakti-hari-katha. As such I am taking shelter to the Lotusfeet of Gurudeva and other Guruvargas, to make me eligible to perform the highest for of devotion.

Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupad has repeated the words hari-katha- kirtan or hari-kirtan several times in these two small paragraphs. He thus placed special emphasis on them. Yet Srila Prabhupad has also stated in His sermons that a professional speaker can never speak hari-katha. A professional speaker's purpose is not for the satisfaction of Hari, but for the acquisition of money. But hari-katha (which is identical with Hari) descends only on the tongue of that sincere devotee who has dedicated himself fully for the service of Sri Krishna, and who is serving Sri Krishna at every step, twenty-four hours a day. As such devotee is rarely to be found in this world, hari-katha is also scarce.

The conclusion is that when there is no actual hari-katha, we cannot obtain actual benefit. (phalena phalekaranam anumiyate, by the fruit of any action, it's cause can be ascertained). Srila Prabhupad has also said: "A stipend holder or a contractor cannot explain the Srimad Bhagavatam. We should refrain from approaching the professional priest and first see whether he devotes his time fully to the Bhagavat or not."

Srila Saraswati Goswami Prabhupad often used the word adhoksaja to indicate that the Supreme Lord is beyond the comprehension of the gross and subtle sense-organs of the conditioned souls. He has explained the etymological meaning of the word in this way: "Adhoksaja refers to the One Who reserves the right of not being exposed to human senses- either gross or subtle (adhah krtam indriyajajпanam jena sah)." This is substantiated by evidence of the Taittiriya UpaniSad:

raso vai sah, rasam hyevayam labdhvanandi bhavati.

ko hyevanyat kah pranyat yadesa akaSa anando na syat, esa hyevanandayati

Ultimate Reality is rasa-absolute bliss. After attaining absolute bliss, the spirit soul gets happiness. If Ultimate Reality would not have been anandaswarupa, bliss-incarnate, who else could have demonstrated the manifestation of the body and the impetus of life in it? He certainly gives happiness to all. Here, Ultimate Reality is indicated as He, the masculine aspect of Godhead. Krishna has emphatically said, "I am the only Master and Enjoyer." Here 'I' and 'He' denote personality. This has also been substantiated in the Brahma Samhita by the following verse: ISvarah paramah krsnah sac-cid-ananda-vigrahah, anadiradirgovindah sarva-karana-karanam.

Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur has emphatically instructed to speak hari-katha, but again He Himself has imposed conditions of the qualities which must be in the speaker for being entitled to speak hari-katha. His forceful words indicate that only realized emancipated souls can speak hari-katha, and that no conditioned soul of this world is entitled to do so. So how to reconcile these two emphatic instructions of Srila Saraswati Goswami Thakur?

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu imposed the following condition to His personal associates at Sri Chandrashekhar Acharya Bhavan at Sri Mayapur: 'Only those who have control over their sense-organs will be allowed to witness My pastimes of dancing in the form of Lakshmi Devi'. All the prominent personal associates who were present at that time in the house of Chandrashekhar Acharya, like Sri Advaitacharya Prabhu, Srivas Pandit and others, expressed their regret that they were not entitled to see the dancing of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in the form of Lakshmi Devi, as they felt they had no control over their sense- organs. On hearing this, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu smiled and said that they all would become 'Mahayajneswar' and there would be no difficulty for them to see the pastimes.

What teaching we are getting from this pastime of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu? A realized emancipated soul cannot think of himself as competent or qualified in understanding the pastimes of the Supreme Lord. Realized souls are naturally humble because of their contact with the Highest Reality. Enslaved jivas or conditioned souls are always in contact with the things of the world over which they can dominate. So vanity and egotism are natural to them. Whenever anybody expressed his vanity in any form, he is not entitled to get the qualification of understanding the eternal transcendental pastimes of the Supreme Lord.

Now the problem is: how will the neophytes start bhajan or speak hari-katha, the highest form of devotion? Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Thakur has given advice in regard to this in his writings as well as his personal life. Whenever He started speaking hari- katha, He first took absolute shelter to the preceptorial channel. He has said in His teachings that the transcendental Reality can be understood only through hearing from a bona fide shuddha bhakta or sadguru (adhoksaja vastu sravanaika vedya). He has given emphasis on Srauta-vani-kirtan-to recapitulate what we have heard from the lips of bona fide shuddha bhakta with engrossment of mind. We conditioned souls, who aspire to get enhancement in devotion, are entitled to do anukirtan: after intently hearing hari-katha from a bona fide devotee to reproduce it, praying the grace of the Guru and the Vaishnavas.

Why all living-beings of this Universe are attracted by Shri Krishna?(From the letters of Srila Gurudeva)

My dear Sree *** Prabhu

Received your affectionate letter dated 8th November 2000 and noted the contents.
As per advice of eye specialist and also persistent request of friend devotees I got the cataract operation of my left eye on 23rd November, 2000. Operation was successful. Doctor has advised me to take complete rest for 15 days atleast. As such I am confined now in my own room at Chandigarh Math. I am also restricted by doctor to write letters and to deliver speeches.
By the grace of Shri Guru Gauranga Radha Madhav ji, the month-long Damodar Vrata celebration terminated at Chandigarh Math grandly and successfully. A large number of devotees from different parts of India as well as some devotees from foreign countries participated in this function. I had to speak in Hindi and English. I tried to observe Damodar Vrata as minutely as possible. Every year as it is a kind of vow to me. Here also I was totally engaged in attending early

morning (at dawn), morning, forenoon, afternoon and night sessions from 4:30am to 11pm. In the observance of vow, I am to think continuously the teachings of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu- Shikshashtaka as well as uninterruptedly to remember the transcendental pastimes of the eight periods of Sree Radha-Krishna. So I had less opportunity to devote myself to any other work during that time. The Holy Advent Anniversary of our Most Revered Gurudeva was performed very grandly on 7th November in which countless number of devotees participated to offer pushpanjali. Many persons including foreigners have taken Harinam and Mantra Diksha. One newly initiated foreign devotee of Africa is insisting for my going to Mauritius Island as well as Johannesburg, another place in South Africa. The friend devotees are prohibiting me to undertake foreign tour now at the present state of my indisposed health. As I am not fit for preaching tour. I have canceled my going to several places in Punjab, Jammu and Himachal Pradesh. Supreme Lord Shri Krishna willing, if I go to Bombay, I shall return to Calcutta from Bombay early January (say 3rd or 4th January).

It comes to my mind by going through your letter and your intent desire to come to India to worship Shri Gaur-Hari and Shri Krishna, Supremely Lord Shri Krishna, in fact attracts all because of His Supreme Transcendental Qualities. The name Krishna denotes that He pleases all by attracting all. All others, other than Supreme Lord Shri Krishna are being attracted by Him. As for example– It is the nature of the magnet to attract iron and it is the nature of iron to be attracted by magnet. But when there is rust on the iron, this nature is not seen to be manifested. When the rust is removed iron immediately runs towards the magnet. All living beings of this world in their real selves have got attraction for Shri Krishna i.e. have got natural love for Shri Krishna. It is not to be borrowed from somebody else. When soul by misuse of his relative independence becomes averse to Shri Krishna is enveloped by the illusory energy of Supreme Lord and is hurled down into this world of ocean of births and deaths. A fortunate soul by the previous good impressions of the eternal good deeds comes in contact with the bonafide pure devotee, the eternal nature to love Krishna is awakened. Your feeling is applicable to all living beings of this universe. You are blessed as you have got natural inclination to worship Gaur-Hari and Shri Krishna.

I have discussed about your desire to live permanently in India for getting congenial atmosphere of associating with pure devotees because it is very difficult to get such congenial association in your place.

I am anxious to know about the present health condition of your wife. Hope this will find you all in good health & spirit.

May All Merciful Shri Guru Gauranga Radha Krishna bless you.

Affectionately yours,
Bhakti Ballabh Tirtha

Why Mahamaya is creating a desire in us to be averse from the Lord, even though she is His servant?

Definition of Bhagavan— “Bhaga” means opulences and ‘Van’ means one who possesses. Supreme Lord possesses not only sixfold, but infinite kinds of opulences. Amongst those opulences, internal spiritual potency ‘Antaranga shakti’, external material potency ‘Bahiranga shakti’ and marginal potency ‘Jiva shakti’— these three kinds of energies are relevant for the conditioned souls of this world. Internal potency and external potency are stated as ‘Yogamaya’ and ‘Mahamaya’ respectively. For instance we find here in this world, mother is affectionate to child. Out of affection, mother sometimes adores the child and sometimes slaps the child. Similarly, Supreme Lord out of affection, punishes the conditioned souls for their misdeeds through Mahamaya and adores and advises them through Yogamaya to submit to Lord and worship Him. Supreme Lord never interferes in the relative independence of conditioned souls. If relative independence is stopped forcibly, individual soul which is Anu-Saccidananda will be destroyed. If consciousness is destroyed, Supreme Lord Who is All-Existence, All-Knowledge and All-Bliss and Jiva, a minute particle of consciousness originating from the Marginal Potency— both will not be benefited. Hence Supreme Lord does not interfere in the relative independence of conditioned souls but as Indwelling Monitor existing within their hearts, He bestows them discriminating power of understanding between good and bad, eternal and non-eternal. Sometimes He Himself appears to help Jivas to make good use of their relative independence and take absolute shelter to Him and also inspires the conditioned souls through His personal associates. The individual soul should submit to God willingly. When Supreme Lord does not want to do anything to change the minds of the conditioned souls forcibly, how conditioned souls like us can use force to change individual minds. Sadhus (pure devotees)

by their ideal lives and affectionate behaviour, always help all conditioned souls to accept the right path willingly.
Enslaved jivas, who are averse to Sri Krishna and want to enjoy the material world, are enveloped by material energy of three primal qualities, Sattva, Rajah and Tama, which is designated as Mahamaya. By Raja Guna non-eternal living beings are created, by Sattva Guna they are sustained for some time and by Tama Guna they are destroyed. Supreme Lord, to fulfil the desires of unfortunate jivas, has created 84 lacs (8,400,000) species. Lord is satisfied by creating Human species because they are capable of accepting Eternal Truth and giving up non-eternal things i.e. they are capable of worshipping God. Human birth is not meant for eating, sleeping, defending, and mating like beasts and birds. It is only meant for worship of Supreme Lord.

såñövä puräëi vividhäny ajayätma-çaktyä
våkñän sarésåpa-paçün khaga-dandaçükän
tais tair atuñöa-hådayaù puruñaà vidhäya
brahmävaloka-dhiñaëaà mudam äpa devaù

Srimad Bhagavatam 11.9.28
'After creating variety of living beings— trees, reptiles, beasts, birds and ferocious animals etc. by His own Maya Shakti, Supreme Lord did not get contentment. Lastly, He created human species and was satisfied because Human beings have got the proper eligibility to worship Krishna.' So, God's desire is that human beings should worship Him.
One person had enough money, was a well-to-do person and had all comforts but he had difficulties with his wife. His wife was disobedient and obstinate. Always there was disturbance and want of peace in the family. He had one friend who was very expert in mesmerism. He expressed his heart to him and prayed to him whether he could make his wife obedient to him. That mesmerizer gave him one magic stick. By that stick he could regulate his wife. Whatever he would order her to do, she would be forced to do. He was very happy on hearing this. He came to the house with that stick and ordered his wife 'sit down', 'stand up', 'come here'. In this way whatever he was ordering his wife, she was doing. But after doing this for some time, he did not find any interest in it because it became like a puppet show of idols, without life. He wanted that his wife should obey him willingly and with her independence. If necessary she could object, could say anything against also. If she moved like a lifeless doll, husband would not get any satisfaction. Similarly, if Lord forcibly makes sentient beings to do something, consciousness will be destroyed, it will become matter. Supreme Lord is not a fool, He is Omniscient. He cannot do such nonsense which is beneficial to Him and to the sentient beings. Wife, retaining relative

independence, should do action for the satisfaction of the husband, willingly. As it is stated before, by making her a lifeless doll, husband will not be benefited.

Why teachings of Sri Shikshastaka are essential for attaining Radha-Krishna prema?

Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu appeared in this very Kaliyuga of Vaivasvata Manvantara by taking the form and mode of worship of Radharani, principally to taste the sweetness of Supreme Lord Krishna. Simultaneously He also distributed Krishna-prema to all, irrespective of caste, creed and religion. He is the Highest Munificent Form of Godhead. Although He is Supreme Lord, He takes the Form of devotee to teach others about how to love Krishna, by practising Himself. So it is very essential to go through His teachings— 'Shikshashtaka'. A sincere servitor always tries to satisfy his object of worship. During Vrajamandal Parikrama, devotees will go through His teachings throughout the month of Kartik-vrata. A votary, to satisfy Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Supreme Lord Sree Krishna, should atleast practise the first and third verse of Shikshashtaka, sincerely from the core of heart. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has taught in the first verse, mainly seven principal attainments or more correctly, all attainments while doing Sree Radha-Krishna Sankirtan. Sankirtan means— (i) to perform Kirtan without tenfold offences; (ii) to perform kirtan completely i.e. to sing His Name, Form, Attributes, Personal Associates, Pastimes; and also (iii) in the company of bona fide shuddha bhaktas. For doing sankirtan without tenfold offences, you are to go through the third verse of Shikshashtaka— to be humbler than a blade of grass, more forbearing than tree, to give respect to all thinking that your object of worship is residing in their hearts and not to have the desire to get respect from others. Everything depends upon one's practice. Just merely by speaking we cannot get the desired result. We are to examine ourselves whether we are actually following the teachings of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. The actual follower will surely get the highest object— Radha-Krishna prema. Service means to engage all efforts and all sense-organs (gross and subtle) for Guru-Vaishnav-Bhagavan.

Sarvopadhi-vinirmuktam tat-paratvena nirmalam
Hrsikena hrsikesa-sevanam bhaktir ucyate

One can serve Krishna only after being completely free from mundane egos— gross and subtle, and acquiring the knowledge that the aspirant is of Him.

Why we are supremely fortunate to be born in this Kaliyuga of the seventh Manvanter?

It has been emphatically stated in the authentic scriptures of India, the world situation will have gradual deterioration from piety— righteousness in the four ages— Satya, Treta, Dwapar and Kali. The first of the 4 ages was ‘Satyayuga’— ‘Golden age’, which was adorned prominently with four virtues— penance, sanctity, compassion and truth. Next deteriorated age was ‘Tretayuga’— ‘Silver age’, which was adorned prominently with three virtues – sanctity, compassion and truth, one quality ‘penance’ was less. Third deteriorated age was ‘Dwaparyuga’ or ‘Brajen age’ which was adorned with compassion and truth— two qualities penance and sanctity were less. Last fourth age was ‘Kaliyuga’— ‘Iron age’, which is prominently devoid of three virtues— penance, sanctity and compassion. Truthfulness exists but insignificantly. As per scriptural evidence, we human beings are now in the grip of terrible unrighteousness. Tamaguna, violence and cruelty are predominant and the whole world is in the grip of horrible malevolence and jealously. Of course, in one sense, we human beings of Kaliyuga in this world are most unfortunate.
But according to Indian scriptural evidence, we human beings who have got the opportunity to be born in this Kaliyuga of the seventh Manvanter are supremely fortunate. Span of life of Kaliyuga is 4 lacs 32 thousand years. Double of Kaliyuga is the span of life of Dwaparyuga, triple of the span of life of Kaliyuga is Tretayuga and span of life of Satyayuga is four times more than that of

Kaliyuga. Total span of life of four ages is 43 lacs 20 thousand years. Span of life of four ages multiplied 71 times is equal to the span of life of one Manu. One day of creator Brahma is equal to the spans of lives of 14 Manus. The present Kaliyuga of the seventh Manu or Vaivasvata Manu is very significant in the sense that Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu— Combined Manifestation of Radha Krishna, The Most Munificent Form of Godhead appeared and distributed highest Krishna Prema— transcendental divine love of the highest order— the highest bliss to all irrespective of caste, creed and religion.

Sree Krishna The Most Sweet Form of Godhead who appeared in Dwaparyuga just before this Kaliyuga and had his pastimes only with his personal associates, He did not distribute that highest Krishna Prema to anybody.

Sree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu also taught the easiest way of getting that Krishna Prema by chanting the Holy Name without tenfold offences. He has taught eight verses, which are renowned as Shikshashtaka. In its third verse, He taught how can one do Harinam without offence— 'Trinadapi sunicena tarorapi sahishnuna amanina manadena kirtaniyah sada harih'. The votary should be humbler than the blade of grass, more forbearing that tree, should not desire for name and fame but give respect to all. We are to give respect to all thinking that our object of love Sree Krishna is residing in the heart of all.

By the fruits we can understand whether we are performing bhajan actually or not. As we have got relative independence we can do good and bad works as per good and bad use of his relative independence, but he cannot get the fruit according to his will, Supreme Lord controls the fruits. We cannot do anything good or bad without His knowledge.

Our Most Revered Gurudeva and Most Revered Grand Gurudeva established Maths out of compassion for the conditioned souls to give them scope to worship Sree Krishna and His devotees. The Holy Place is not meant for amassing money or quarrelling for getting mundane benefits. Sinful persons may come with some sinister motives to get mundane benefits. The present situation of the world and country is such that undesirable persons may enter to it to exploit the sadhus.

Seeing present day situation, responsible persons of the Holy Place should take proper steps to protect the Holy Place for the benefit of the sincere aspirants and votaries. At the earliest it should be discussed with reliable responsible well-wisher sincere spiritually inclined persons.

We should very carefully think that any moment we can lose this valuable human birth. Nothing will go with us except pure devotion to Supreme Lord. 'Muthi bandhe aya jagat mein, hath pasare jayaga'— we came in this world with cuffed palm and we shall have to leave this world with empty palm. It is

extremely ridiculous and shameful for ascetics to demand false vanity of ownership of money and property given by others. Those who have got such heinous mentality should go back to the house and earn money. They should not spoil their lives and lives of others. Even Ambarish Maharaj, autocrat legitimate king of the whole world, had no attachment to his worldly property. It is by utter ignorance that persons enveloped by illusory energy of Supreme Lord think themselves as proprietors of any property or wealth. It is stated by Sree Vedavyas Muni in the 9th Canto of Srimad Bhagavat about ideal holy life of Ambarish Maharaj that those who demand ownership of property even in worldly sense which may be legitimately earned, they will go to inferno. Sree Gaudiya Math's teachings is Rupanuga Bhakti. Srila Rupa Goswami has warned the bona fide votaries in his writing in Upadeshamrita, first two verses— (1) Vaco vegam manasah… (2) Atyahara prayasascha…. He has given a strong warning for false vanity of being a bona fide devotee without practical life. These two are the basis of pure devotion. Even we have got no hold over our own physical bodies— gross body and subtle body, as well as real self Atma. These are the products of the Apara and Para potencies of Supreme Lord Sree Krishna. Everything belongs to Supreme Lord.

You must do your practice with sambanda

Once, Our Gurudev was engaged in programs in Punjab. For a few days he had been delivering lectures at a Sita-Ram temple. One lady had been coming to every program and one day asked a question: 'I have been coming regularly to this temple for 50 years now. I do circumambulation of the mandir, engage in kirtan and every day come for arotik. Whenever a sadhu comes, I always come to hear from them. After so much time doing worship I do not see any fruits of this. At the same time, my relations with my family members and my attachment to them has only increased. Why?'
Gurudev liked this question very much. He said to all the people present 'This is such a good question that you should all hear the answer to it. You have also been coming for so long and are in the same condition as her. Please come tomorrow and I will give the answer to you all. '

The next day came and he first asked her a question. “When these sadhus come, have you ever once asked them: ‘Who am I? Who are Sita-Ram? What is my relation with Sita-Ram? ” She said that she had never asked this.

Our Param Gurudev, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur, used to stress this so much to His disciples. “You must do your practice with sambanda. There is a natural progression from sambanda (knowledge and faith in who we are, what this world is, who Krishna is, and what our relationship with Him is), through abhideya (spiritual practice), to prayojana (the ultimate goal). So, if you are doing so much spiritual practice thinking ‘I am of this world, I am for my son, my wife, my father‘, then any fruits that come from your practice will only increase your material ego. If we want to make progress, then we must do our practice with the proper Sambanda ‘I am of Krishna, this world is the external potency of Krishna, Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He attracts all and pleases all. My relation with Him is as an eternal servant.”

You can do so much practice; come to arotik, engage in kirtan, do circumambulation of the mandir, hear from sadhus, but if you do it thinking ‘I am of this world‘ , then the fruit of your practice will go to your material ego. If we want to progress, we must wake up in the morning, go to bed at night, and all day remember Mahaprabhu‘s instructions to Sanatan Goswami. We are of Krishna. Remember Him and never forget Him. Do Hari kirtan. Engage all your senses, your body and especially your mind in Krishna‘s service. This should always be on our mind.